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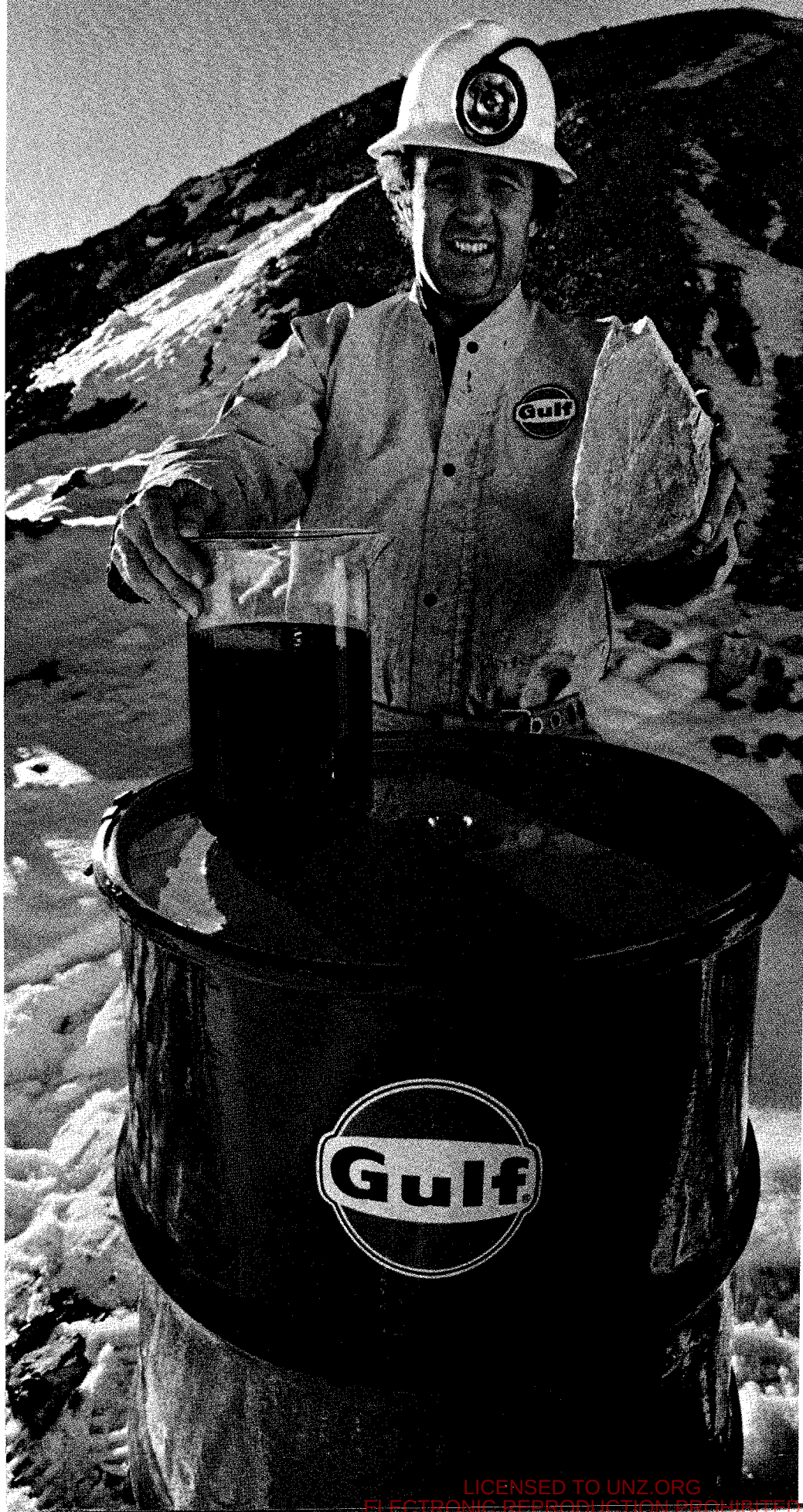
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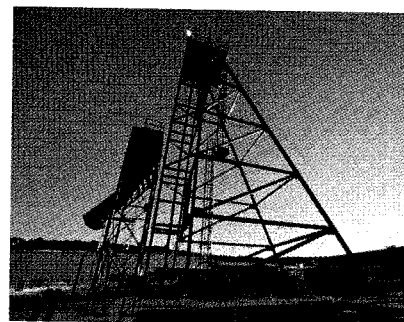
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TRB

from Washington
June 7, 1980

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Reagan's New Age

Ronald Reagan is the conservatives' Walter Cronkite: grandfatherly, disarming, twinkly, and certitudinous. I would think the odds favor him at the present time to be our next president. He makes extraordinary gaffes and they don't seem to injure him; the public is applying a different standard to him, I think, than to former candidates. George Romney came back from Vietnam in 1968 casually saying he had been "brainwashed" by officials, and the furor overwhelmed him—he suddenly withdrew from the race. Ed Muskie was up in the New Hampshire primary in 1972 and choked up in a snowstorm over something William Loeb had put in the *Manchester Union-Leader* about his wife, and this example of supposed lack of control finished him off. Again, George Bush was assailed last February by four other GOP presidential rivals on the stage at the Nashua, New Hampshire, high school gymnasium because he didn't want them to join the one-on-one debate he had arranged with Reagan; that ruined him. They were just paltry incidents grabbed by the watchful press. But Reagan? He goes from one extraordinary utterance to another. What is parity? He doesn't know; he says anti-trust laws should be applied to organized labor; he has odd figures about the increase in federal workers and deficits; he assails the Supreme Court's refusal

last February to block the use of federal funds for Medicaid abortions as "an abuse of power as bad as the transgressions of Watergate"; he says Vietnam vets aren't eligible for GI benefits. Such exaggerations, such blunders, such gaffes are repeated constantly (somebody is getting together a pamphlet of them, I believe, and it should be amusing) but they don't seem to injure Reagan. People rather like them, I suspect. They are artless, genuine, spur-of-the-moment improvisations. What has he said now? It gets to be rather fun! This is a new age and this is a new kind of candidate. We are caught in the gulf between America's still soaring expectations and a feeling of national let-down; Reagan is the smiling, comfortable figure who brings back our wistful nostalgia, who reminds us of happier days, who maybe can lead us back again.

And Carter has handicaps. The economic ones are the heaviest. We are in a recession and it is getting worse. Otto Eckstein of Harvard, one of the best economic futurologists in the business, said the other day that the developing recession may be "the second worst since World War II" and "may well be the worst." Under the presidential system the responsibility falls on the chief executive. It was "Hoover's depression"; it was "Truman's mess in Washington." We don't have cabinet government or party government to dilute the blame. Who else is there to denounce but Carter for unemployment and inflation? Carter has radio and television at his disposal, the two most powerful political weapons in the world, and he could make out a stronger case for himself than he does. Woodrow Wilson said of the president: "His is the only national voice in affairs. Let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him. His position takes the imagination of the country."

But Carter is no Franklin Roosevelt, able to explain things in an enthralling fireside chat. Take this enormously complicated Carter proposal for an oil-import fee: it would add 10 cents to every gallon of gasoline you and I have to buy, at a time of inflation, and it would raise about \$10 billion a year in federal revenue. Congressmen loathe it. Imagine seeking election with the gas pump hose tied around your neck! Carter proposes it as an executive action, and a federal appeals court will hear arguments on June 9 as to whether

it's legal. Carter meanwhile threatens Congress that he will veto pending resolutions against the fee if they come to him.

You have to admire Carter's gutsiness for proposing such a thing in the middle of an election, bad politics as it is. What he says is that we have got to get out from under the power of the Persian Gulf oil states; that the fee will reduce gasoline consumption maybe 100,000 barrels a day by the end of the first year; that we need it to protect our economy and national security; that our allies pay gas taxes of a dollar or more a gallon; and that they can't take our national will seriously while we continue our "profligate" use of petroleum.

Ronald Reagan has much easier answers than that. It's comforting to hear him. Somebody has told him that there's just as much oil in the ground as ever came out of it, and that if we remove bureaucratic regulations and controls it will gush forth. "We have more oil and gas yet to be found in America than we have used so far," he reassured a Milwaukee audience last March. He frowns on those who tell Americans to drive less and lower thermostats. He has a splendid delivery. He's an actor. He believes what he says. The way to meet inflation is to reduce the tax burden. Crime? Simple! Impose a mandatory prison sentence on anyone committing crime with a revolver. (He's against a federal gun control law.) He's for the death sentence. Federal deficits? A constitutional amendment for a balanced budget looks good to him.

But it's in foreign affairs that Reagan comes out toughest. He and his stalwart advisers will let the country lift up its chin again. He opposes SALT II, favors the neutron bomb, the B-1 bomber, the MX missile. The Panama treaty was a disaster. "(But if Panama should step over the line just once in violation, we'll step in!" he warned March 27). A big applause line is his reference to the "immorality" of the Vietnam War: "letting the young men fight and die in a war the government is afraid to let them win."

"What are your favorite books?" a reporter queried this spring. "I have to tell you that it has been a long time since I have been able to sit down and enjoy a book," Governor Reagan apologized. "I hate to confess that, but I am constantly beset with reports. . . . While governor, that's where it began. There was very little time to read a book."

That's our man, frank and disarming! He'll make an interesting president.

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Correspondence

Depraved commentary

To the editors:

One of the well-known side effects of acts of war is to make political abstractions such as national honor and *realpolitik* look like real things, and real things such as life and death look like abstract statistics. The workings of this side effect can be seen, I think, in a good part of the American response to the failed rescue mission in Iran. Thus Dan Rather's announcement on the day Vance resigned that the failed mission "has claimed another victim"—the other victim being Vance, who lost his job. This observation was broadcast to the nation on the evening of April 24 and was, in my opinion, an utterly depraved comment.

And thus also the *TNR* editorial evaluation of the costs and benefits of the mission ("The Jimmy Carter Desert Classic," *TNR*, May 10). The death of eight soldiers ranked rather low in *TNR*'s list of costs, and even then was balanced immediately by a supposed benefit these deaths purchased. The benefit is that Carter's casualty-free record has now been blotched, thus freeing the president to pile up more corpses in the future. Dear editors, some normal sense of the value of human lives seems to have been lost here.

Paul L. Berman
New York, New York

Alive and well on Broadway

To the editors:

In the May 3 issue of *TNR* Robert Brustein offers Broadway some "advice." The whimperings from his self-imposed exile are uninformed and inaccurate. He is sulking, having turned down an invitation to the party, and his only joy is the assumption that no one is having any fun.

This is an appropriate time to review the season, as it has essentially just ended. Like it or not, our Broadway calendar is now controlled by the cut-off date for the Tony Awards, probably as appropriate a device as any of the other arbitrary definitions of "season." Still alive, and in some cases still kicking, are 33 attractions. They include five new musicals and 12 new plays. From prior seasons there are nine surviving musicals and two plays. Of the five

revivals, three are musicals and two are plays.

These attractions are selling tickets to enthusiastic audiences (Brustein decries the standing ovation as a sign of our ultimate decline and proof of audience dissatisfaction) who are paying hitherto unheard-of prices for their seats. When not reviewing, Brustein should stick to his monotonous diatribes about the paucity of worthy attractions. His concern for the producers is as ludicrous as his suggestion for a producer cooperative is ridiculous. Frankly, he simply does not know what's going on and seems militantly determined to stay that way. He is an astute, if dyspeptic, critic but he is simply out of touch with the Broadway scene and as such does a disservice to your readers when he strays.

Arthur T. Birsh, Publisher
Playbill
New York, New York

Friends of capitalism

To the editors:

Capitalism has friends who recognize the merit of your suggestions for tax reform ("Saving Capitalism From Its Friends," *TNR*, April 26). As economists who are concerned with taxation, we would like to congratulate you for proposing a sound and balanced program for tax reform, the kind of program that many public finance economists would endorse. To summarize your program briefly, it involved the following eight points: 1. Eliminate the investment tax credit and permit a deduction of the present value of depreciation at the time that an asset is purchased; 2. Integrate the corporate and personal income taxes; 3. Eliminate the special treatment of capital gains; 4. Institute inflation adjustments for interest expenses, interest income, and the base for calculating capital gains; 5. Permit individuals to establish investment accounts in which assets could be traded, with taxation deferred until money was withdrawn from the accounts; 6. Tax unrealized capital gains at death; 7. Eliminate the deductibility of personal interest expenses; 8. Tighten business expense deductions.

While each of us would have proposed a package that differed in some elements, we agree that, taken as a whole, these proposals would provide a

substantial improvement over present tax law. We would note that the proposals are interrelated in complex ways. Both revenue-gaining and revenue-losing measures are included; the revenue balance would depend on details of implementation. Points 4 and 5 make 3 more feasible, and 3 makes 2 more acceptable. We would also urge that in any proposal to change tax law so substantially, it is important to be sensitive to the need for an equitable transition to the new regime. Finally, we would add that at today's inflation rate, indexation of the brackets, personal exemptions, and other dollar allowances of the personal income tax is essential.

David Bradford, Princeton University
Milton Friedman, Hoover Institute
Arnold Harberger, University of Chicago
Julius Margolis, University of California
at Irvine
Nicolaus Tideman, Virginia Polytechnic
Institute
William Vickrey, Columbia University

Michael Kinsley replies:

An endorsement from Milton Friedman, et al., requires a brief rebuttal. We're pleased that these academic friends of capitalism see merit in our program. But our program is very different from the tax program being pushed piecemeal through Congress in the name of productive capitalism. That program consists of simple tax cuts, in various guises, for capital profits. The prime movers are business interests, but they are getting help and legitimacy from conservative academic economists. We hope these friends of capitalism will tell their friends, the capitalists, where their true long-run interests lie. The signers of this letter have more influence with the business community than the editors of *The New Republic*.

Watch dogs and busy bees

To the editors:

Stephen Chapman's snide report on the League of Women Voters ("America's Mother Hen," *TNR*, May 17) was so far and so often off target that space would not permit all the comments and disagreements that could be presented.

He labeled members "implacable dogooders," an appellation they should accept with pride. In this world the choices seem to be to do good, to do nothing, or to do evil. Most of us seem to be in the second group, complaining about the third group and wondering

why "they" (the first group) don't do something about it.

So the Leaguers spent more time debating whether they could afford a study on the subject of health care rather than on the relative merits of a competitive or nationalized system? Good! That means that when they take a position it will be based on solid study by and the consensus of its 117,000 members; not on the emotions of the moment or the oratory of an impassioned advocate.

The members I have known have not been "too bland and genteel," but persistent, aggressive if necessary, and always competent and well informed. Frequently League activities lead them on to areas of public service. In recent years our local League has had members elected to the state legislature, as selectmen, as members school boards, and to other positions in our area towns.

There are a few "mother hens" among the members. There are also gadflies, watch dogs, work horses, busy bees (mostly workers, no queens and very few drones), wise owls, apple-cart upsetters, movers, and shakers.

"Does the nation need a League of Women Voters anymore?" You bet it does. Just as long as there is good to be done. Long live the League!

Arnold D. Johnson
Amherst, New Hampshire

Grammatical analysis

To the editors:

Paul Robinson's "The Philosophy of Punctuation" (TNR, April 26) only proves the old adage holds: "you can't take the anal out of analysis"—even grammatical analysis.

Robert L. Collins
Athens, Georgia

On behalf of Kennedy

To the editors:

Your espousal of Anderson as the only alternative to Reagan and Carter is shocking. It has become fashionable to tout Anderson. No one will deny that he is a literate, pleasant enough man in the hustings, but he hasn't always been so benign politically. His membership in the Trilateral Commission alone ought to discredit him, and although he may have become a "born again liberal," that transformation has been oddly sudden.

On the other hand, Edward Kennedy has matured as a leader in public life in full view of all America. Whatever his

flaws—and we are all flawed—he has shown a sense of the public life like no other man in Congress. He has the experience, his record in Congress is unassailable, and he is sensitive to the best interests of the people.

Unfortunately he made a gaffe on entering the race, but surely it was a superficial one. If ever America needed a good man, it needs one now, and Kennedy leads them all.

Sylvia Day
Woodstock, New York

A scoundrel's refuge

To the editors:

I read with interest George Ball's response to Professor Luttwak's "panegyric" (Correspondence, TNR, April 26). Nowhere does Mr. Ball attempt to answer his critics or support his own position. Rather, his sole response is to clothe himself in the flag and say "My premise is the United States. . . ."

That position was well answered long ago by Samuel Johnson when he wrote "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

Benjamin Duhov
Stamford, Connecticut

To the editors:

George W. Ball (Correspondence, TNR, April 26) attempts to paint his burnoose red, white, and blue. No, Mr. Ball, your premise isn't the United States but Saudi Arabia.

Richard S. Usem
San Francisco, California

Solzhenitsyn's distinctions

To the editors:

While I cannot presume to speak for the author of *The Oak and the Calf*, Irving Howe's "An Open Letter" to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (TNR, May 3) calls for a response. Howe chides the Russian writer for insufficient discrimination in his attacks on Western leftist intellectuals. A number of outstanding leftists, Howe argues, had excoriated the Stalinist dictatorship from the very beginning: he mentions Orwell, Silone, Koestler, and several others.

Irving Howe has a point, although to label men like Orwell and Koestler "leftist" is to run the risk of the very oversimplification he finds objectionable in *The Oak and the Calf*. More serious is the fact that Howe shows insufficient

concern "with reporting opinions other than [his] own in good faith"—a charge that he makes against Solzhenitsyn. In the only quotation from *The Oak and the Calf* that he has chosen to illustrate Solzhenitsyn's "scattershot attacks," Howe has suppressed the beginning phrase, indicated here in italics: "As Orwell writes, those very same Western public figures who were outraged by individual executions anywhere else on earth applauded when Stalin shot hundreds of thousands."

While it is clear that Solzhenitsyn agrees with Orwell's thought, it is surely misleading to present it as the Russian writer's own observation. This is all the more serious because Howe exhibits this text—deprived of any identification with Orwell—as a representative example of Solzhenitsyn's alleged refusal to make "elementary distinctions." The mention of Orwell would have been inconvenient here, for just a few lines earlier Howe named Orwell as one of those figures who, he claims, negates Solzhenitsyn's sweeping judgment.

Alexis Klimoff
Associate Professor of Russian
Vassar College
Poughkeepsie, New York

Irving Howe replies:

I am unable to follow Alexis Klimoff's logic. That Solzhenitsyn cited Orwell in behalf of a point that he, Solzhenitsyn, wanted to make, does not invalidate the main criticism of my Open Letter: namely, that Solzhenitsyn systematically ignores or underestimates the work of earlier anti-Stalinist left intellectuals in exposing the Stalin dictatorship and its Gulag. Whether Solzhenitsyn does this out of ignorance, arrogance, or ideological presumption is a question.

We stand corrected

To the editors:

With reference to your April 5 TRB column I feel that you stand to be corrected as well as chided with the same intensity you reserved for Ronald Reagan therein. While questioning the superficiality of some of the former governor's proposals—specifically, if 30 percent was indeed the figure he had endorsed for the proposed Kemp-Roth tax cut, I find it amusing that you stated that President Kennedy "cut taxes \$12 billion in 1964." My dear editors, I

(continued on page 39)



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Contents

TRB from Washington	3	Reagan's New Age
	4	Correspondence
Comment	7	Who's Serious and Who Isn't
Emily Yoffe	8	On the Hill: The Saga of Harrison Williams
Deborah Shapley	10	Shrugging Off SALT
Charles G. Bolte	12	Maine's Plight
Thomas Balogh	15	Is Keynes Dead?
Elie Kedourie	18	Western Deference in the Mideast
		Books and the Arts
Stanley Kauffmann	22	Films: Singing the Body Electric
Robert Brustein	23	Theater: The Play You Are Not Allowed to Dislike
Lewis Coser	24	The Future of the Book
Carl Dennis	26	Poem: "Sunday Matinee"
Wilfrid Sheed	28	Jack by Herbert S. Parmet
John Romano	29	Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party by Graham Greene
Anne Tyler	31	Off Center by Barbara Grizzuti Harrison
J. Anthony Lukas	32	Fire Watch by Alan Dennis Burke
Jack Beatty	34	Falling in Place by Ann Beattie
Robin Winks	36	Mysteries
	36	Brief Reviews:
Dan Cryer		Drylongso by John Langston Gwaltney
Joey Bonner		The Dragon's Village by Yuan-tsung Chen
Susan von Hoffmann		Home Before Night by Hugh Leonard
	39	Paperbacks
Washington Diarist	43	Fishing

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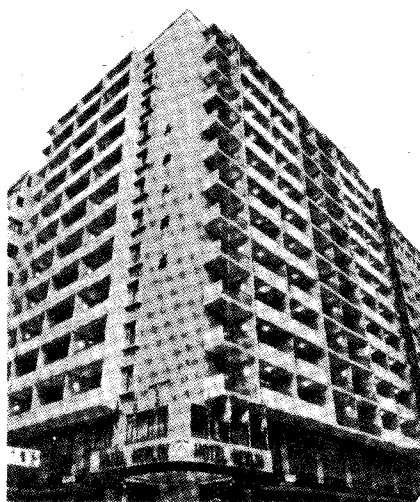
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June 7, 1980



Who's Serious and Who Isn't

White House press secretary Jody Powell says President Carter will refuse to participate in any debate with John Anderson in it. The alleged reason is that Anderson is not a serious candidate. The real reason is exactly the opposite. The Carter people want to keep Anderson out of the presidential debates because they take him very seriously indeed.

The way these pre-debate rituals usually are acted out, it is the principal challenger who insists on the opportunity to go one-on-one with the most prominent candidate, hoping for maximum exposure and the appearance of equal stature. The leader either refuses to debate or insists on an open debate in order to submerge his chief opponent in a sea of fellow challengers. This traditional dance was performed most recently in Nashua, New Hampshire, before the Republican primary, when George Bush tried to arrange a debate with Ronald Reagan alone and Reagan, who had declined to debate at all in Iowa, piously insisted that all the candidates should be included.

If the Carter strategists really believed that John Anderson's non-party candidacy is a "fantasy," as Powell described it last week, they would be welcoming Anderson into the debate. Powell said, "once you start opening up the system, it is hard to know where to draw the line." But what better way to undermine Reagan than to present the president of the United States against the Republican, the independent, the sun-worshipper, the flat-earthier, and so on? Clearly the Carter people are more eager to hurt Anderson than to hurt Reagan, which belies their posture that Anderson is a candidate of no consequence. That's exactly the kind of petty hypocrisy—lack of seriousness—that is driving lifelong Democrats to support Anderson.

The latest Louis Harris poll shows that 23 percent of voters support Anderson in a three-man race, with 33 percent for Carter and 39 percent for Reagan. If it is stipulated that Anderson has a "reasonable chance" of winning, his support rises to 29 percent, with 35 for

Reagan and 31 for Carter. Anderson would carry eight of the 10 largest states under these circumstances, for 216 of the 269 electoral votes needed for a majority. Clearly Anderson is a candidate of consequence. The League of Women Voters, which has taken unto itself the role of semi-official purveyor of presidential debates and evader of the FCC's equal time rules, had better include Anderson in its plans if it wishes to retain its reputation for neutrality and fair play.

The where-do-you-draw-the-line problem is real but not insurmountable. Barry Commoner, candidate of the Citizens party, and Ed Clark, the Libertarian candidate, also are legitimate candidates and both have widespread support. But there is a valid justification for debates limited to candidates who actually have a chance of winning. There is no justification for debates limited only to candidates of the two established parties, thereby denying an independent a real chance of winning.

Anderson's chance of winning suffers less from voter indifference than from state and federal laws that are prejudiced against independent candidates and new parties. When Anderson announced his independent campaign more than half a year before the election, five state deadlines for ballot applications already had passed. The Reagan and Carter campaigns each will receive \$30 million from the federal government, while Anderson will get nothing, no matter how well he does. Nevertheless, in raising private funds, Anderson is hamstrung by the \$1000 limit on individual contributions. Keeping Anderson out of the televised debate—which is sure to be the centerpiece of the fall campaign—would be just one more barrier thrown up to protect the established parties and their candidates.

The Carter people are desperately trying to persuade Democrats that Anderson's discovery of liberalism is too recent to be trusted, that he is making up his politics as he goes along. John Anderson is a great unknown, and that does worry us. But Jimmy Carter is known, and that worries us more.

On the Hill

The Saga of Harrison Williams

Didn't Allen Drury write this one? Or was it Gore Vidal?

Harrison Arlington Williams Jr., the bright young son of a well-to-do Republican coffin manufacturer, is looking for his place in the world. He leaves New Jersey to try Washington, but neither foreign service training nor a stint as a *Washington Post* copyboy (nice touch) seems right for him. Then comes World War II, and service as a Navy pilot. After the war, before settling down to real life, "Pete" Williams gets a taste of "real life" as a steelworker in local 1105. Then it's off to Columbia Law School, class of '48, and an attempt at being a country lawyer in New Hampshire. That lasts a year.

Back in Republican New Jersey with his first wife and young children, he decides to run for Congress as—of all things—a Democrat. He wins. He makes the acquaintance of all sorts of people—such as Alexander Feinberg, a lawyer and unsuccessful congressional candidate, and Sandy (no relation) Williams, then a newspaper publisher and later an unsuccessful entrepreneur. They become important later on. It takes about 20 years to get close to Pete Williams, say those who aren't.

After winning again, he loses in 1956 (Ike coattails). But this is only a temporary setback, because Williams finally has found his vocation. In 1958 he returns to Washington, this time as the junior senator from New Jersey. He becomes a spokesman "for the young, the elderly, the disinherited and those who suffer unfair discrimination" (citation from Princeton on receiving an honorary degree in 1978). Through the combination of Williams's tenacity and a political climate ready for social legislation, Williams put through the first federal assistance program for mass transit, migrant worker protection laws, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and public education guarantees for handicapped children, among other things.

"He passed more legislation drunk than most senators do sober," says a former aide. Which leads one, this being a true Washington saga, to the battle with the bottle. In those days, it was possible for a senator to be drunk most of the time without having anyone but other politicians and the press know about it, as the press was inclined to keep the good stuff to itself. Things do get a little out of hand when Williams is censured by the NAACP for showing up drunk at a breakfast meeting. By 1970 he is up for his third term and things are shaky on the home front, both personally and professionally.

State Democratic leaders are conceding frankly that they expect to have a hard time holding on to Williams's

seat, and Williams faces a primary challenge from Frank Guarini (now a congressman), who bills himself as "the sober candidate." But Guarini's effort fails, in part because Williams, knowing he is endangering his life, stops drinking and makes a clean breast of things to the *New York Times*. There is also a gift from the Texas electorate in the form of the primary defeat of Senator Ralph Yarborough, which puts Williams in line to chair the Labor and Public Welfare Committee.

Organized labor sees its duty and makes the public welfare of Williams a priority. He gets \$250,000, one-third of his total war chest, from 28 labor groups. He wins.

Williams is now something of a new man. His chairmanship allows him to hold hearings on the social causes he champions, and his sobriety lends greater confidence to his urbane, if rather vague manner. With the not inconsiderable help of staffer Steve Paradise, he goes after the securities industry, his bailiwick as chairman of the Securities Subcommittee. Also, following his divorce, he marries a Labor Committee staffer named Jeanette Smith.

Despite these new developments, Williams continues to keep what might charitably be called a low profile. There are theories why he never has become a national figure on the order of Hubert Humphrey or Jacob Javits, as would befit a man with his legislative record. Perhaps his years of drinking have made him wary of uncontrolled situations; or perhaps, since New Jersey has no commercial television stations, he gets cut out of publicity that would accrue naturally to any senior senator; or perhaps he got some valuable insights from his copyboy days; or perhaps he simply has no desire to fight a natural modesty. Whatever the reasons, Williams ducks press attention aggressively.

Williams's press aide is handed an opportunity most press secretaries are on the public payroll to connive. An early morning network news show requests the senator's presence to discuss a bill he has sponsored. To the aide's amazement, Williams declines the offer by explaining, "they'll screw me." When the aide persists, saying they are offering three minutes of free publicity, Williams becomes more adamant. "You don't know these people," he says. The press secretary feels rather foolish telling the network that Williams has a previous engagement at 7:15 a.m. the morning of the show.

This attitude has done nothing to prolong the tenure of Williams's many press secretaries. It also drives Mrs. Williams, as it would any staffer concerned with her boss's image, wild. And, this being the Washington saga that it is, attention must be paid to the second Mrs. Williams. From the pictures that line his Senate office—Jeanette and Pete and Robert Redford, Jeanette taking Pete's arm, Jeanette and Pete and their little dogs—one can't help but feel she's the archetypal second wife. She's so smiley, so slender, and so blonde. She is one of the main reasons he gave up drinking, people say. And she gave some polish to Williams, got him to dress better, go to the Kennedy Center, get on the

Washington social circuit, and buy a home in Georgetown.

Because her employment pre-dates her marriage, Mrs. Williams has continued as a committee staffer, primarily handling constituent problems, drawing a salary of about \$34,000. This has created problems with the other staffers. "When you have a hierarchy, and someone not at the top has direct entree to the boss, you can forget the hierarchy," says one staffer who speaks highly of the abilities of both Williamses.

Mrs. Williams's admirers call her forceful, a perfectionist, and the politician in the family. Her detractors call her malevolent, Evita, and now Lady Macbeth. People say terrible things about her. How she meddles with her husband's personal staff and goes crazy when he's not getting the press adulation she feels he deserves. One former staffer says she threw a fit when a labor group gave a humanitarian award to Danny Kaye she felt belonged to her husband. Someone else says she was responsible for a staffer being fired when he gave only five dollars for Williams's recent 60th birthday party. She denies it.

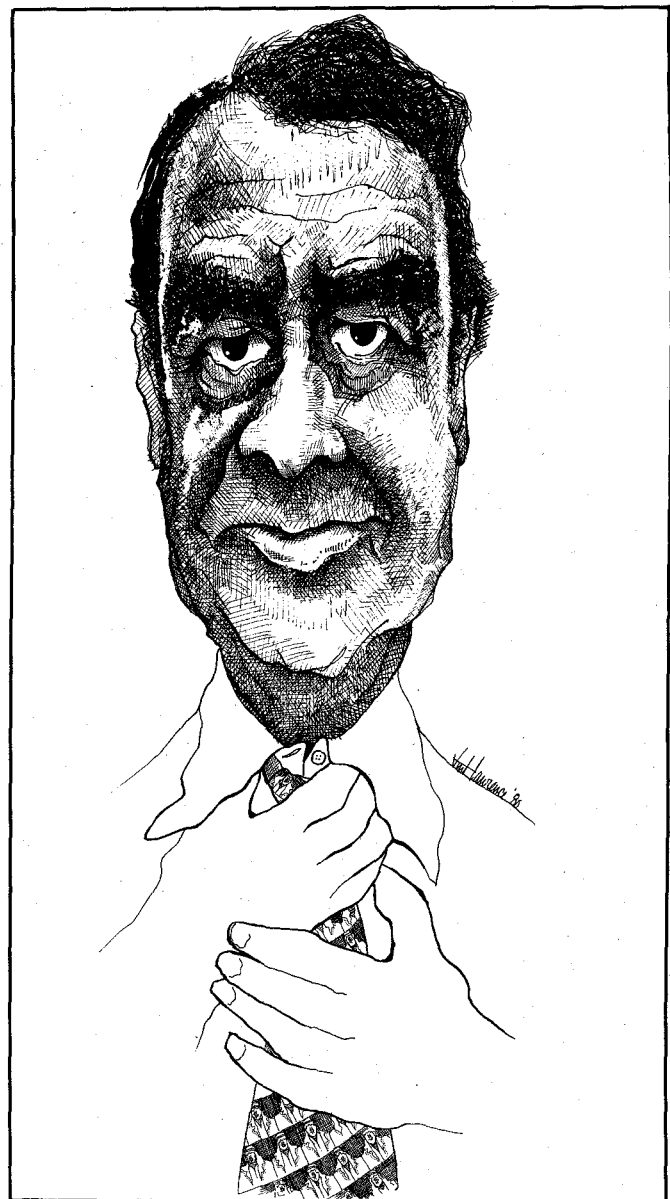
Some people say she's the reason for Pete Williams's new troubles.

Before ABSCAM, questions were not asked of Williams's character. Sure, there were niggling little things, things you could find in any official's career, but nothing of a scope to damage his reputation as an effective senator and a nice guy. And there's nothing that anyone would even bother mentioning if he weren't being combed for lice these days.

There was his friendship in the early days with Bobby Baker which, combined with more recent developments, leads people to say he has bad taste in friends. There was the accusation that he and a dozen other senators had been paid to introduce private immigration bills for Chinese seamen, an accusation the Senate Ethics Committee found to be without basis in 1970. Some eyebrows were raised in 1974 when Williams got a waiver for the endangered species law, which he had co-sponsored, in order to let the Hardwicke Companies import 24 tigers for a New Jersey amusement park. There have been complaints, although no one could say it is illegal, that he receives most of his campaign contributions and honoraria from securities and labor groups, an unseemly practice since he writes legislation affecting these interests.

In the 1976 campaign his Republican opponent, losing by more than half a million votes and outspent by half a million dollars, tries to make an issue of Mrs. Williams's connection to a garbage recycling firm called Biocel. Mrs. Williams has received 13 percent of the company stock free of charge because the firm, which includes old friends Alexander Feinberg and Sandy Williams, "respected and admired" Mrs. Williams, and "decided they would like to depend upon her for advice," Feinberg says at the time.

Biocel's recycling process, which remains commercially untested, requires phosphorous. There is plenty



drawing of Harrison Williams by Vint Lawrence

of phosphorous, as well as titanium, in mines in Piney River, Virginia, which leads Feinberg and Sandy Williams to form United States Titanium, in hopes of marketing the titanium for industrial use.

According to press reports, the financially troubled mine company gets a gift from Allah in the form of FBI Arabs with \$100 million to invest. Senator Williams allegedly receives stock in the company gratis in exchange for a promise to get government contracts for the mine.

Feinberg and Mrs. Williams also figure in the other ABSCAM accusations against Senator Williams. The senator is accused of trying to get the bogus Arabs to invest in a hotel and gambling casino project in Atlantic City whose parent company, Hardwicke Companies (the tigers, remember?), employs Mrs. Williams as a paid consultant. Feinberg, at Williams's recommendation, has been a lawyer for the company since last summer. All this has prompted the *New York Times* to investigate Senator and Mrs. Williams's personal finances and to conclude that their bookkeeping is somewhat novel.

Williams's problems come at a time, in spite of his seniority, that his power as a legislator is ebbing. The theorists say this is in part because of the times, since social programs are now about as popular with the electorate as social disease, and in part because of the rift that has developed between the senator and labor.

It's not clear who started the falling out. Some say his 1976 landslide liberated him from the sense that he owes his political career to labor. They add that Mrs. Williams and Steve Paradise, who moved from the Securities Subcommittee to staff directorship of the Labor Committee, encouraged Williams to think that organized labor has not properly appreciated him.

The death of the Labor Law Reform Bill by one vote in the Senate in 1978 made the breach public. Labor officials complain mightily that the bill, which would have liberalized unionizing laws, was introduced too late, allowing a strong opposition to coalesce, and that Williams didn't have the personality needed to force through such legislation.

Paradise, now vice president of the New York Stock Exchange, has a different version. "The votes just weren't there," he says. As for labor's behavior following the defeat he offers, "you could write a book about them. Call it *They Eat Their Young*."

Labor's feelings were not assuaged when Williams gave his support to a bill to diminish OSHA—whose establishment he originally sponsored. Williams's aides say this is a tactical move on his part designed to give him some control over what would be even greater erosion of the bill by the increasingly conservative Senate.

Before ABSCAM Williams himself seemed to sense that the next decade would not offer him the accomplishments of the last. For the first time he was indicating an interest in running for the New Jersey governorship, an opportunity he always had declined. "I think he was getting frustrated with the tempo down here," says an aide. "There is all this time spent on balancing the budget and not being program-oriented. I think he'd grown disenchanted."

The gossips add that Mrs. Williams fancied being the state's first lady.

If nothing else, Williams's gubernatorial ambitions are dead. Immediately following the first ABSCAM stories, displaying the good humor he has shown throughout the ordeal, Williams tells a group of New Jersey businessmen: "Two or three weeks ago [some newspapers] were speculating that I might be running for governor. . . . It occurred to me that there should be some ways to still this speculation. Somehow, I think I've overdone it."

Of course, Washington novels offer two possible conclusions to the story. The distinguished senator is found to be, as he always maintained, free of any wrongdoing. He goes on to win even greater respect in the eyes of his colleagues and constituents—especially his colleagues, who always get queasy when this sort of thing happens. The other conclusion, obviously, is that

the senator, through either malice or misdirected good intention, is found to be a crook and ends his career in a country club prison.

And there, for now, the story ends.

Emily Yoffe

Emily Yoffe is a Washington-based freelance writer.

The consequences may be bitter.

Shrugging off SALT

Political wisdom has it that there cannot be arms control between Washington and Moscow in the atmosphere of mistrust that followed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in January. The Carter administration decided to put its campaign for ratification of the SALT II accords on a back burner to "punish" the Soviets for their action. Conservatives, who thought the accords a bad deal in the first place, hope that a new administration will go back to the Soviets and negotiate tighter limits than are provided for in the present accords. Liberals, who are now more preoccupied with the MX missile system than with SALT, note that without the warheads limits in SALT, the case for MX evaporates. So they don't mind the delay.

Everyone is shrugging off SALT II, the more so because no one expects the Senate to transact serious business during an election year. But if ratification is postponed until 1981, the accords will have to be amended to have meaning. We may find ourselves trying to renegotiate SALT II in 1981, and maybe even in 1982, when the Soviet strategic weapons buildup will be even more menacing than it is now. The chances of doing better on that round are slim indeed.

Whatever one thinks of the cumulative value of the SALT II accords, the fact is that their language is intimately tied to the weapons procurement schedules of both sides, particularly to current Soviet programs. The accords would check several ongoing Soviet strategic programs, but no US program. In fact, they are far more in the US's interest than in the Soviets' (although the administration, when making its case for SALT II last year, did not like to admit this for fear of embarrassing the Soviets). To delay SALT II ratification, and incur the risk that the Soviets will stop behaving as though SALT II is in force, is to do the Soviets a great favor. They can then proceed with programs that otherwise would be curbed. A look at Soviet weapons programs, and decisions they may have to make even this year, shows that the case for ratifying SALT II now is urgent. As one high level official said: "It seems an odd way to punish the Soviets for invading Afghanistan, by allowing them to build an unlimited

number of nuclear warheads."

In urging a delay of SALT II in the heat of the moment after Afghanistan, the Carter administration may be trading off the long-term security of the country for short-term political ends. There is no doubt that many senators are genuinely angry with the Soviets; there is no doubt that Carter himself is disillusioned; there is no doubt the public thinks that arms control consists largely of favors to the Soviets. To press for ratification this year would require courage and staying above the popular clamor. But the argument for ratification is far stronger than it was a year ago. The facts are:

—The Treaty does not make the United States dismantle any of its present strategic weapons systems, but it does require that the Soviet Union reduce its present 2504 strategic systems (which can be land- or sea-based ICBMs or bombers) to 2400 six months after the treaty takes effect. A separate deadline written into the treaty requires the Soviets to have no more than 2250 strategic systems by December 31, 1981. Dismantling is not a simple job: based on past experience, it could take at least a year to dismantle all 254 systems. Thus, if the Senate delays ratification into 1981, the Soviets doubtless will demand that this deadline be extended into or through 1982.

—A main selling point for SALT II in the Senate has been that it does not delay the American system the Soviets fear most, the cruise missile. Cruise missiles are limited by the Protocol, an accompanying document which expires on December 31, 1981. The United States agreed to the deadline because cruise missiles are not scheduled for deployment until 1982. But the Soviets have said privately that, as a price of extending their ICBM dismantling deadline, they will demand that the Protocol be extended too: this could delay deployment of some cruise missiles, thus complicating the process of amending SALT II.

—The Treaty limits both sides to 820 land-based ICBMs with multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRVs). The ceiling does not affect the United States, but the Soviets are actively MIRVing their biggest "heavy" missile, the SS-18, as well as the SS-17 and SS-19. According to US officials, the Soviets are expected to bump up against the 820 ceiling, and have to decide whether to stop MIRVing in order to comply with SALT II by the end of 1980. (A recent *Time* magazine piece predicted they could face this decision as soon as this summer). If SALT seems dead, clearly the Soviet military is going to want to continue the MIRVing process.

—Another ceiling in the Treaty limits each kind of ICBM to the number of MIRV warheads with which it previously was tested. This has the effect of limiting the 308 SS-18s—the force which soon will threaten the US Minuteman ICBM force—to 10 warheads each, even though it appears to be built to carry 14 and can be modified quickly to carry 20. The effect of this ceiling is to keep the Soviet SS-18 force at a total of 3080

warheads while the Treaty is in force (through December 31, 1985), instead of the 4312 warheads possible if the Soviets placed 14 on each missile, or the 6160 if they put on 20. These higher numbers clearly threaten the US Minuteman, since there is no way the United States can deploy the MX, its protection for the Minuteman, before 1986. Without SALT II, then, there likely will be a perception that one "leg" of the American strategic "triad" is vulnerable, thus casting new doubt on American military and political strength.

—As early as 1981, the Soviets are expected to make long-term decisions about their next generation of strategic land-based ICBMs, strategic bombers, and submarines. Were SALT II in force, they would be limited to testing and deploying only one "new type" of land-based ICBM. Since they are designing five possible "new types" which could be ready for testing by the end of 1985, this restriction places a significant brake on the Soviet ICBM program. Also, the Soviets may have to decide in 1981 or 1982 whether to proceed with a new version of the Backfire bomber and whether to build their new, giant strategic submarine, Typhoon. In the absence of SALT II, not only would they be free to proceed with all five "new types" of ICBM (a decision very typical of their past ICBM development), but they might be inclined to go ahead with the bomber and submarine, too. Thus it would become all too clear to the outside world, including Americans, that the momentum of Soviet strategic weapons building was not slackening at all.

At present, Soviet leaders say they want SALT II ratified. The Soviets appear to be complying both with SALT II and with SALT I, which expired in 1977. However, in early 1981 (especially if they do not like the signals from the newly elected administration), they have several ways to show their dissatisfaction. The Soviets have been building "Delta" class submarines at a rate of approximately three per year, and retiring the older "Y" class subs with each deployment to stay within the limits prescribed in SALT I. So they could simply stop retiring a "Y" class strategic submarine every time they put a new "Delta" class submarine out to sea trials at Murmansk. Or they could produce a few more Backfire bombers than the 30 per year that Brezhnev pledged to Carter in an agreement accompanying SALT II last June. Or the Soviets could deploy existing Backfires outside the mutually agreed upon deployment areas. Any of these acts very likely would be observed by American satellites, and immediately taken as a diplomatic signal that the Soviets were fed up with SALT, the United States, or both.

It is not too fanciful to predict that in such circumstances Washington would be ringing the tocsins. Not only did the Soviets invade Afghanistan, Washington pundits would say, but they have welched on their word on SALT—that most pivotal and sensitive point of US-Soviet relations. And people would suddenly discover that the United States would

be unable to match Soviet strategic weapons deployments for many years; for example, if it adopted the program currently advanced by the Committee on the Present Danger, the United States could not even build to levels that would violate SALT II. We don't have a new strategic bomber under serious consideration; we can barely produce submarines at the present level, let alone speed up building very much. We have only one "new type" of ICBM. And so on.

The point is not to dwell on ghoulish fantasies about what Washington might be like at this time next year. It is simply to say that mood is not a very good basis for conducting business between the superpowers. Other things are more predictable and permanent, and should be given far greater weight: such as the size and influence of the Soviet military establishment, especially as Brezhnev's power wanes, and the signatures of heads of state on treaties which they have pledged their governments will ratify. After all, rescuing our long-term interests from fickle, shifting moods is what we have leaders for.

Deborah Shapley

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Being down doesn't mean you're out.

Maine's Plight

Dresden, Maine

Is Maine the poorest state in the union? The traditional way of ranking states is by per capita income, which usually puts Mississippi at the bottom. Two radical economists, Gar Alperowitz and Jeff Faux, had the bright and sensible idea of cranking in the cost of living, limited to necessities, which of course varies widely among states and regions. The resulting calculation, reflecting the facts that Maine is at the end of the transportation line and gets very cold, ranks the state as 50th (Mississippi moves up to 49).

The Alperowitz-Faux ranking was front page news all over Maine when their report was released last year. Responses varied, ranging from outrage to ridicule to characteristically self-deprecating satisfaction: "Well, we always knew we were a poor state." Those who advocated bringing in new enterprise from outside the state hated the rating because it makes Maine sound like part of the third world; advocates of more aid to the poor loved it because they hoped it would bring in more federal dollars—at least before the big Carter blitz to balance the budget at the expense of the poor, the unemployed, and the elderly. Maine is one of the states

that gets more from Washington than it sends there in taxes, much of it in Title XX welfare payments. Poor immigrants, in the view of the experts, are more useful to the state's economy than rich, precisely because they bring in their trail more federal aid, and have modest expectations; the well-off have higher demands for local services, want potholes fixed on the town roads and a swimming pool at the high school, therefore causing pressure to raise local taxes.

The state government, instead of encouraging the development of local industries and the marketing of such natural resources as exist here, has been wooing national companies to open plants here for years, with small success. Maine's resources don't include what most industries need, and it's too far from the chief markets. A big tax break lured Pratt & Whitney to open a plant in South Berwick recently, but an anonymous company spokesman later admitted that low wages and the lack of unions were more important factors in the decision than the tax break. Irony here: Pratt & Whitney's higher-paying Hartford plant has been manned (and womanned) by many Maine residents, who for generations have "gone to Connecticut" (the phrase has entered the language of poverty here) in search of higher wages. An engineer at a then-new plant in South Portland said some years ago, "Our company came to Maine, quite frankly, because we knew there was a large force of women with nimble fingers and soft brains here. Such a person is perfect for assembly-line work in a semi-conductor plant." The state is still largely non-union: perhaps in part a reflection of the fabled Maine independence ("We believe in letting every man go to hell in his own way," the new secretary of state from Maine once told me). Workers, especially women, are paid so poorly that many of them find it economically advantageous to work long enough to qualify for "the unemployment" (the word "compensation" is seldom added) and then go back to work long enough to qualify again. Nor is there much benefit, either financial or psychological, in assembling widgets or stitching shoes for the minimum wage, paying for baby-sitters or day-care centers, buying gas to commute (Maine has virtually no public transportation, and people live spread out), at the cost of missing time with the family and the housekeeping.

For men on marginal jobs, time on "the unemployment" means time for house maintenance, a constant in this severe climate, and for subsistence or barter work in the neighborhood: wood-cutting, clam- or worm-digging, trapping, poaching, part-time lobstering, carpentering, or other odd jobs for the summer people. In rural and coastal Maine, there are many alternatives when regular jobs run out. A young friend of ours, who set up as a contractor just as the housing market collapsed, has turned to eeling in Merrymeeting Bay. Multiple jobs are also common. Our garbageman drives the school bus and operates an auto-repair shop out of his home garage, and our snow-plow man also digs worms, runs a big blueberry patch, and black-tops

parking lots. Maine is preeminently a state of jacks-of-all-trades. All of this is hard to catch in statistics, and much of it is likely to be paid for in cash or barter, which is unlikely to be reported to the IRS.

This raises a fundamental reflection about all these statistics and brings to mind Mark Twain's droll definitions of untruth: "Lies, damned lies, and statistics." (A state planning office report on social assistance lists a town in Penobscot County with 167 percent of its households receiving aid.) It is no doubt as true of Mississippi as it is of Maine and other rural states that the inhabitants supplement their formal (and reported) pay with part-time (and unreported) odd jobs and barter. But the statistics, by definition, measure only what can be counted. Nobody knows how big the invisible economy is in the United States; the increase in the circulation of \$100 bills suggests that it is enormous (but you find those mostly in Florida, along the Marijuana Coast, formerly the Gold Coast, not in Maine; although Maine has become a drug-smugglers' haven, the goods are apparently sold mostly southward).

Alperowitz and Faux, co-directors of the Washington-based National Center for Economic Alternatives, neatly sidestepped the problem of invisible income by basing their study on an observation ignored by the Census Bureau. "Everyone knows that how well-off you are depends not only on the money you earn, but also on the prices you pay." So they figured in, state by state, the prices of the basic necessities: food, energy, housing, and health care. These prices have been rising at nearly twice the rate of the non-necessities, and, they say, "account for 70 percent of the purchases of four out of five American families and are the primary cause of the change in rankings when income is adjusted for living costs." This may also account for why the rich get richer and the poor get poorer: it costs the poor more to stay alive and warm, while it costs the rich comparatively less increase in income to enjoy their luxuries (necessities rose at 11.6 percent in the first 10 months of 1978 while non-necessities rose at only 6.1 percent). The market on the Maine coast this year for big yachts is still strong, for small boats it is weak; good for Mercedes Benzes, poor for standard-size Chevrolets.

This new index produces sharp and surprising changes in the established rankings. The northeastern states suffer the most: New York drops from 12th to 27th, New Jersey from third to 16th, Massachusetts from 14th to 37th. Maine actually didn't have far to drop: it was already 46th even in unadjusted income. As might have been intuited, the Sunbelt gained what the Northeast lost: Florida rose from 28th to 10th, Texas from 25th to eighth, Oklahoma from 32nd to 18th, Arizona from 31st to 26th; but California—surprise—stands still at fifth.

A principal factor in the shifts is the substantial variation in the price of food. New England is hard hit by the decline in local produce and the consequent need

Per Capita Income By State, 1977

New Income Rank (adjusted for cost of living)	Unadjusted income rank	Adjusted income	Unadjusted income
1. Nevada	4	\$8268	\$7988
2. Delaware	7	8096	7697
3. Wyoming	11	8014	7562
4. Maryland	10	7820	7572
5. California	5	7417	7911
6. Illinois	6	7379	7768
7. Connecticut	2	7364	8061
8. Texas	25	7325	6803
9. Michigan	9	7285	7619
10. Florida	28	7254	6684
11. Ohio	18	7198	7084
12. Kansas	16	7178	7134
13. Washington	13	7161	7528
14. Virginia	24	7134	6865
15. Colorado	15	7127	7160
16. New Jersey	3	7118	7994
17. Minnesota	17	7093	7129
18. Oklahoma	32	7056	6346
19. Iowa	23	6990	6878
20. Alaska	1	6989	10586
21. Pennsylvania	19	6841	7011
22. Indiana	21	6831	6921
23. Oregon	20	6777	7007
24. Nebraska	27	6755	6720
25. Wisconsin	22	6754	6890
26. Arizona	31	6748	6509
27. New York	12	6696	7537
28. West Virginia	36	6642	5986
29. Missouri	29	6641	6654
30. Georgia	35	6632	6014
31. Kentucky	39	6565	5945
32. Hawaii	8	6548	7677
33. North Carolina	40	6543	5935
34. Louisiana	42	6462	5913
35. North Dakota	33	6369	6190
36. Montana	34	6367	6125
37. Massachusetts	14	6364	7258
38. Tennessee	45	6312	5785
39. New Hampshire	30	6306	6536
40. South Carolina	47	6190	5628
41. Alabama	48	6188	5622
42. Idaho	37	6174	5980
43. Rhode Island	26	6167	6775
44. Arkansas	49	6156	5540
45. Utah	41	6134	5923
46. South Dakota	38	6122	5957
47. New Mexico	43	6044	5857
48. Vermont	44	5734	5823
49. Mississippi	50	5639	5030
50. Maine	46	5572	5734

National Center for Economic Alternatives

for high-cost trucking. Housing prices vary even more widely; it costs more to take shelter in Boston than anywhere else. And OPEC hits the Northeast more than other regions, a major factor despite the greatly increased use of wood fuel in recent years.

These calculations, expectedly, have not gone unchallenged. A Chicago bank released a report stating that Maine had the second-highest number of millionaires per capita of any state: an apparent paradox, accounted for by the state's small population (just over a million), which includes a number of big real estate brokers and automobile dealers (this number may thin this year), successful Portland businessmen and lawyers, and a good many retirees who claim Maine as chief residence while wintering at Barbados.

The Alperowitz-Faux analysis was directly criticized

by Carl E. Veazie, one of Maine's leading economists of the more conventional stripe, formerly at Bowdoin, now at the Center for Research and Advanced Study at the University of Southern Maine. His statement opened with a frankness unusual in senior economists: he called the report "both misleading and inaccurate." "The fact is that there are no reliable figures on the comparative cost of living in the fifty states," Veazie went on. "The closest approximations are the data shown in the three budgets (low, intermediate, and high) for a four-person family which are computed annually by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for forty metropolitan areas (including Portland, Maine) in twenty-nine states." Veazie then went on to quote data from this source showing that Portland is over the US average on expenses for necessities, except medical care, which this non-economist interprets as reflecting the typical Mainer's reluctance to go to doctors, and positive revulsion against going to dentists: Maine teeth are in terrible shape. (A recent study by a state health agency showed that 35 percent of six-year-olds have decayed permanent teeth, the typical 14-year-old has more than 10 decayed teeth, two out of five of Maine's 14-year-olds have lost two permanent teeth.)

Veazie added that Portland "appears" to be one of five areas that have "average household incomes less than their respective intermediate budgets." He reproduced the Department of Labor table for 1977 rank-ordering the 40 metropolitan areas on "Relationship between average household incomes and intermediate family budgets": Portland ranks 37th (Houston, to no one's surprise, leads). So Veazie's details don't quite support his sweeping opening attack, and he goes on in the same statement to ridicule the complaint of the head of the Maine Economic Resources Council that Maine's bottom ranking is due to "self-appointed advocates of no growth" (whenever you read "self-appointed" you can anticipate a slur).

Soon after we moved here, a neighbor said, "Maine's a great place to live if you have an invisible source of income." The remark reflected the existence of two Maines, one comfortable, the other uncomfortable. In Bar Harbor you couldn't throw a stone without hitting a millionaire, but in some towns along the coast you find near-mansions interspersed with tumble-down houses. In recent years these houses have been replaced largely by trailer-homes, the only affordable housing for many Mainers. The small town we've lived in year-round for the past seven years has a handful of well-to-do "from away," a few prosperous farmers in the narrow strip of rich bottom-lands beside the Kennebec, a majority of decently paid workers, many of them at the nearby Bath Iron Works or in state government at the nearby capital of Augusta; and 22 percent of the families draw food stamps, just about par for the whole state. The big (unionized) paper and pulp mills pay well: Millinocket, a town carved out of the North Woods at the turn of the century by the Great Northern Paper

Company, is in the top rank of per capita income in the state. They used to say in the paper-mill towns, before the new, less stinking processes were introduced, "That awful smell you smell is the smell of money. I like it." But the independent loggers (not unionized) who supply much of their raw material operate on perilously narrow margins. The real economic muscle in the state, and therefore much of the political muscle, still lies with the pulp and paper giants, as detailed in the Nader report, "The Paper Plantation," by William C. Osborn. The companies are all absentee-owned. Maine was a province of Massachusetts until 1820 (admitted to the Union as part of the Missouri Compromise), and is still a colony economically. The major decisions affecting its economy are made in Boston and New York boardrooms. Luckily for Maine, those decisions recently have favored expansion here. Maine now leads the nation in paper production, which means lots of jobs.

A secret factor boosting the Maine economy is the presumed presence of Soviet submarines offshore. These unseen weapons-platforms are among the chief locomotives of the Maine economy, along with the forests and the tourists. The biggest fabricating plant in the state is the Bath Iron Works, which builds guided-missile frigates and other anti-submarine vessels as well as commercial ships. There are big, and payroll-heavy, military installations at the Brunswick Naval Air Station, home for anti-submarine warfare aircraft, and the Portsmouth Navy Yard, which is actually across the harbor from New Hampshire in Kittery, Maine, home for US submarines on Atlantic patrol. Any SALT agreement (III, VI, XVI?) that seriously limited submarine-launched ballistic missiles would cause widespread unemployment on the coast of Maine.

The most enterprising young people have been leaving the state for the last two centuries in search of their fortunes; the great emigration to Ohio came after 1816, still known as Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death, a year in which snow fell every single month. Today there are so few farms left that we have to pay to have our hayfield cut. In the old days, a farmer would come and take the stuff away for nothing. Agribusiness still exists, in poultry and dairies, but perilously: transportation costs of feed-grain from the Midwest are ruinous. Potatoes recently have sold at less than their cost of production. Despite all this, the tide of migration turned in the last decade, and Maine has become one of the fastest-growing states in the East; its population increased 10 percent between 1970 and 1978. Young professionals, seeking to escape the urban rat race and enjoy the multiple opportunities of outdoor recreation and scenic splendor, have become a positive factor in Maine's economy. They include doctors, lawyers, painters, sculptors, writers, craftspeople especially cabinet-makers and potters—many potters. There was an earlier wave of communard-hippies, but they have been discouraged mostly by the rigors of short growing seasons and scrabbly soil, and either have retreated or gone straight. The young

professionals, able to work in Maine outside an environment of big corporations, bring needed skills (although we probably don't need any more lawyers), and tend to boost the economy rather than draw it down. They add to the quality of life: there are many more art shows, concerts, and theater performances than there were when we moved here. Downtown Portland has been revitalized, with imaginative architectural renovation, crafts shops, and new restaurants. A bevy of environmental laws has contributed to cleaning up the rivers, closing the old open-burning dumps, coping with oil spills, and limiting the clutter type of housing development.

Maine may never return to its booming prosperity of 1830-65, when Bangor was the lumber capital of the world, Kennebec ice was shipped to Europe and the Antipodes, Maine-built wooden ships with Maine-bred captains made fortunes in the China trade, Portland vied with Boston as the economic center of New England, and Maine mills wove fabrics for the world. Luckily for us, it was a glorious period in American architecture, so we can still enjoy looking at some splendid houses, many of them built by ship's carpenters.

But there are consolations in the decline. We're down so far that we don't have far to fall in a recession (Maine's unemployment rate runs close to that of the nation, maybe a percentage point or two ahead). There are no steel plants or automobile factories to close down suddenly and throw whole cities into unemployment. The big textile mills fled south years ago in search of no unions and low wages. The farmers of Aroostook County are inured to boom-and-bust even in times of national prosperity, depending on the vagaries of the potato market. Three centuries of sailing close to the wind have bred habits of frugality—make it do, wear it out, do without—along with independence and a stiff-necked pride. The state's appropriation for the indigent elderly was not used up last winter, for lack of applicants from the 30,000 eligible. The rigorous climate is a great character-builder. (Governor Percival Proctor Baxter used to say, "anybody who can't stand the Maine winters doesn't deserve the Maine summers.")

With money going out of style so vertiginously, people are helping themselves outside of the cash economy. Vegetable gardens flourish everywhere; some cities provide allotments on the outskirts where apartment-dwellers can cut their food bills, and for those lucky enough to have access to woodlots, the cost of heating goes way down. (It doesn't go down much if you have to buy firewood, running up to \$100 a cord now.) All conversations last winter centered on the best woodstoves and the best ways to stack wood for fast drying. One neighbor figured that he handled every piece of wood seven times before getting it in the stove. There is serious interest in solar energy in all its forms, biomass, methane, windmills, and hydro-power—not only new studies of large-scale tidal power in Passama-

quoddy Bay, but surveys by the state Office of Energy Resources on the possibility of resurrecting some of the 1400 small old dams, of which only 98 are now in use. Some big oil-burning plants are preparing to convert to coal, which a recent international survey headed by Carroll Wilson of MIT indicates can be cheaper than oil even with the added cost of full environmental protection devices and measures. More and more houses are being built with passive or active solar heating features.

There isn't much in Maine to spend money on beyond the necessities, if there should be any left over. There is no tradition of entertaining at home: it's been too hard to feed your own family for the last couple of centuries. New clothes are seldom required (I've bought one suit in seven years, and that one corduroy, made in Poland, for \$65). Dining out, for the likes of us, is reserved for Mother's Day, and with luck one of your children will invite you to dinner even on that day. The public libraries are good, and there are a couple of first-rate classical music radio stations. As for vacations, where would you dare to go when your license plate bears the word "Vacationland"?

Charles G. Bolte

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Economists in the long run.

Is Keynes Dead?

Economic policy in immediate postwar decades was dominated by the writings of John Maynard Keynes. An almost idolatrous adoration surrounded him. This was mainly because the Keynesian prescriptions were politically rather mild. They did not involve direct government intervention or nationalization. This phase petered out some time in the 1960s. With the victorious penetration of monetarism into treasuries and central banks during the 1970s it has become fashionable to denigrate not merely Keynes's political stance but his life and professional knowledge. An antimyth of almost religious fervor has sprung up around Keynes. University chairs and bank adviserships are acquired by the *bien-pensant* and some good lucre can be had. The adjective Keynesian acquired for many a pejorative flavor.

Yet by all standards the period of Keynesian ascendancy after the war was an unparalleled success. Reconstruction after the most devastating hostility proceeded with unexpected dispatch. By 1949 or so prewar prosperity had been attained or even surpassed

in Europe. Unemployment was a fraction of that endured before the war. The Western economies grew faster than they had in earlier periods. This was true even of countries like Britain, which had a relatively inferior postwar record. There were periods of slower progress, but until 1971 they had little in common with the prewar cycles. A more equitable, more compassionate society and international order seemed to emerge.

There was a snag in this triumphal vindication of the economic policy design based on Keynes. It turned out to be fatal. For more than a generation, the whole world—communist, anti-communist, and uncommitted—has been engaged in a vain struggle to combine internal stability, the avoidance of accelerated price rises, full employment, and sustained material expansion. The whole world has failed. This failure resulted either in the fight against rising prices causing unemployment beyond what was politically acceptable, or in measures to mitigate unemployment, bringing intolerable price explosions.

The liberal Keynesians dismissed the threat of inflation. After years and years of failure, they continued with the effort to achieve a harmonious balance on the tightrope, managing demand so as to have both full employment and price stability. Once investment, consumption, savings, imports, and exports are linked by a rigid equation system, however, policy becomes the hostage plaything of wrong—because inflexibly framed—predictions. Some of the gravest mistakes in policy certainly can be attributed to consistently wrong (and usually far too optimistic) forecasts based on Keynesian models.

The Keynesians failed to detect that new problems would emerge from the conjunction of full employment with the increasing concentration of economic power on both sides of industry. The market power of the steadily decreasing number of giants, and no longer the impersonal signals of market forces emanating from myriads of units, dominates the price system. Market power enables employers to shift the burden of increased wages onto prices, and thus decreases employer resistance against wage increases. Together with the bilateral monopoly relationships established in the labor market, the cumulative wage rounds were the strongest impulse to cost inflation. They fed on and undermined the community. But their uneven incidence and timing set the professions and the workers against one another. And the combination of oligopoly in the goods markets and bilateral monopoly in the labor market destroyed the basis of conventional economic analysis. When "consensus economists" talk about market forces in awestruck terms and implicitly ascribe to it signals assuring the efficiency of the allocative functions, they refer, in the case of manufacturing, to an Arcadian never-never land where myriads of units compete freely.

The ultimate cause of the failure by most economists (Galbraith was a notable exception) to appreciate how

the system was malfunctioning, and to devise policies that deal with it, was that most of the profession—neopseudo Keynesian, monetarist, and all—were passionately concerned that any policy should be "conformable" to the price mechanism and neoclassical analysis. To this end, and mainly implicitly, they assumed that effective competition prevailed, and that sensitivity to changes in price was high. The "consensus" case is based not on the real world with its massive concentration of economic power, but on an economic system of fine and smooth adjustments through the price mechanism, a system that existed only in the minds of academe.

Ideologically, however, there was much to be gained by this refusal to accept reality. It could serve to revive the classical moral claim that income distribution provided all contributors with their due rewards. If a (slightly) underemployed system is stable, the old theory of "real" marginal contributions determining incomes can be (and was) revived. A reinforced "modern" defense of capitalism was at hand. Only very slowly did it dawn on a few that neither basic hypothesis—about the price mechanism and about income distribution—can possibly sustain the weight of the argument, and that planning and more direct controls may prove necessary.

In my opinion the basic cause of the malaise lies in the contradiction between the present distribution of income and the altogether revolutionary change in crude bargaining strength between employers and unions. Among unions there is a legitimate desire for greater equality. Excessive wage-claims are a reflection of highly increased expectations and confidence in union strength; the inflation of prices is the direct result of a failure to accommodate this drive as much as possible on the basis of the widest consensus through a new "social contract" embracing much more than wage restraint, and to win the consent of a large majority. The alternative is mass unemployment or coercion.

What was the reaction of the economic "science"? Did it advance toward a valid synthesis derived from a number of social studies? Not a bit. It went back to the economics of the 1920s: balanced budgets, fixed exchange rates, a reluctance to create sufficient liquidity. Economists wanted to bury Keynes to save their reputations. Above all, they went back to a particularly primitive view of the quantity theory of money as their guidestar.

The monetarist view was that "fine budgetary tuning" was in practice destabilizing. Monetarists attributed balance of payments crises to an overblown public sector, which caused an intolerable rise in the demand for credit. An undue increase in the money supply, they held, caused instability in an otherwise stable system because of the infallible "rational expectations" of entrepreneurs. Indeed, monetarists argued, the necessary and sufficient condition of price stability was a steady increase in the "money supply":

little faster than the expansion of the economy through the increase of productivity.

This monetary doctrine did not offer any explanation of how the changes in the *volume of money* would be translated into *expenditure*. It ignored the essential fact that "money" can act and influence the economy only through expenditure, consumption, and investment.

All evidence suggests that the connection between the volume (supply) of money and expenditure is very tenuous. The monetarist "proofs" are in fact assertions on the basis of an odd use of statistics. In different countries and different times, the relationship between the supply of money and prices or the government deficit has been quite different. Moreover, the monetarists disregarded the lesson of the pre-World War II cycles (and post-1972 boom and bust): that all indirect policy measures, whether monetary or fiscal, can operate only through their psychological impact. But this implies a need for "overkill." That is, measures must be more savage than is indicated by the "objective" needs of full employment once the "boom" has broken (or vice versa). The mechanism "chases" and even random shocks can cause self-perpetuating fluctuations.

The monetarist interlude thus stands out as an incomprehensible aberration of intelligent men and women which can be likened to the Lysenko episode in biology. But Lysenko had some potent persuasive arguments in the Gulag. Western economists have committed their *trahison des clercs* unbribed and unfrightened.

It is not difficult to see why economists as well as politicians embraced this credo with such enthusiasm. It depersonalized the economic problem. Apart from cutting public expenditure and taxation their motto was: "keep the money supply growing at a (low) steady rate and all will be well." This formula washed its hands of short-run developments and their more permanent impact, and concentrated on the never-never land of long-term adjustment while fiercely issuing quantified advice. It absolved everyone of all direct responsibility: it was the inner logic of the system that compelled policy decisions, however unfavorable and unpopular they were.

So much double-talk has issued from the so-called monetarist school that it is essential to define exactly what is not meant by "monetarism." Monetarism does not mean an acknowledgment that there is *some* connection between money and prices, or that inflation sometimes manifests itself by an increase in the volume of money causing prices to rise. Of course there is some connection between money and prices. We live in an economy where transactions are conducted in terms of money. Prices are therefore expressed in terms of money. Under such a system, prices and incomes will affect the volume or velocity of money in circulation and be affected by them. The issue is whether there is a *stable reversible overriding* relationship in which money is the independent, dominating factor which can be used

for strategic purposes, and not merely a necessary but insufficient way to help regulate prices and incomes.

The choice of the "supply of money" as the main criterion and weapon for economic policy is crucial to monetarists because it vindicates the claim that the market is a perfectly competitive one. It is a worldwide neoclassical dream economy, unmarred by the existence of giants and dwarfs, or by dominators and dominated, both nationally and internationally. In other words, it is a model totally unfit to analyze the economy of the modern world and its constituent states and their problems.

The concept of the money supply looks straightforward and seems well documented. It is not. Money has several functions. Among these functions, money's roles as a means of exchange and a standard of deferred payment move on the same orbit as the *total volume of transactions* (accent on *total*). But this does not exhaust the uses of money. It ignores one of the most important functions of money: as a *store of value*. Because of this difference in the functions and therefore in the velocity or efficiency of money, the assumption that money's velocity is stable and governed by long-term institutional or traditional factors is unwarranted. The magnitude can be manipulated. Mistakes can cause havoc with key figures and, in the present monetarist ambience, create panic. To choose such an uncertain and manipulable entity as the main, if not sole, criterion for economic policy is folly. Yet that is exactly what has happened. The difficulties do not end there.

The choice among many different definitions of money necessarily alters the magnitude of its so-called velocity. Velocity, as it is now calculated, does not apply to *all* transactions—both the income-expenditure stream or *flow*, and the changes in assets such as transfers of stocks. It also excludes all non-income transactions (house purchases, other transfers of assets, realizations of paper profits, etc.), though all definitions of money include all relevant assets belonging to the non-personal private sector. It has not been shown—and is very doubtful—that the motivations of giant firms in managing their liquid funds can be subsumed in the national income which accrues mainly to wage and salary earnings. The *true* velocity of money is not merely much higher but also more unstable than the income velocity, and can be a cause of fluctuations. Changes in stocks—that is, of inert deposits—are not caught. Why a single number indicator should reflect all complicated transactions (such as the speculative excesses of financiers) that can dislocate the system has not been disclosed. The statistics of the so-called "money supply" must not be used for policy-making because the possibility that non-income transactions that are excluded from the conventional concept might have a destabilizing effect must not be neglected.

The assertion that merely curbing increases in the money supply will produce an optimal market solution

is wholly unacceptable. If monetarist methods (that is, monetary policy laced with cuts in public expenditure) are used to maintain or restore price stability—which amounts to a direct attack on trade union strength—unemployment on a scale unknown since the war and resembling the miserable period of the 1930s will have to be created. Worse still, the exacerbation of the relation among classes will not allow a relaxation of tight money, as the work force will instantly take the opportunity to repay themselves for past misery by demanding higher wages. Unionization will be accelerated and with it class struggle. The monetarists are well on the way to fulfilling Marx's thesis that an industrial reserve army is needed for the satisfactory functioning of the capitalist system.

The political and social consequences of such a situation will bring back the 1930s with all their disastrous consequences. Hitler restored full employment through rearmament. The vast increase in output gave Germany the means for attaining an overwhelming military superiority in Western Europe against the Anglo-French alliance, even though these nations were far richer and more populous than Germany. By tolerating "structural," that is permanent, unemployment, we are guilty of the same folly.

The victory of the monetarist school has recreated the circumstances—including permanent high unemployment and cuts in vital social services—that gave

rise to the Keynesian revolution. It will do so again unless repressive regimes break the union power and solve the imbalance between economic power and the distribution of national income. The alternative, stagflation, is also unacceptable. But if we are to come out of the present threatening impasse, more is required than a return to Keynes.

In the present structure of the economic system the only peaceful way of dealing with the mixture of oligopoly and monopoly is by consensus, a new *contrat social*. Such a contract would limit the use of coercive measures, whether originating in strikes or in legislation. It will not be easy. The present power of the labor monopoly is inconsistent with the actual distribution of income. It will take more to achieve domestic peace than a temporary wage freeze. But Austria and lately Norway have shown that it can be done. Keynes, having shed his neoclassical outgrowth, will resurge again. Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Volcker deserve the gratitude of economists: they are providing a controlled experiment in monetarism. No weasel words can excuse failure. The more intelligent economists are already looking for cover.

Thomas Balogh

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If the US is not willing to counter the Russians, who is?

Western Deference in the Mideast

by Elie Kedourie

Suddenly the Middle East has become very important. It is widely seen to stand at the center of East-West relations, and is perhaps also the key to whether world peace, which by and large has been preserved since 1945, will continue to be maintained. Some observers of the Middle East see a prospect no less alarming than another shooting war. Others believe Soviet military superiority, their ability to threaten and intimidate, will so frighten a craven, divided, and demoralized Western camp that without firing a shot the Soviets will be able to seize control, direct or indirect, of the Persian Gulf.

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The Soviets will then be in a position to bring about the neutralization of Western Europe by controlling its supply of oil.

There is nothing particularly far-fetched about such forebodings. What prevents us from dismissing them as mere flights of some panic-stricken imagination is that they rest not only on an appreciation of Soviet power and determination, but also on an estimate of the seriousness of recent Western strategic misjudgments—which have been all too real.

After all, before the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviets had done absolutely nothing to put the West in such a dire situation. The Western powers themselves had set up the scenario of their own undoing. The landmarks on this dismal road are quickly enumerated: acquiescence in the replacement of a friendly regime in

Libya by a handful of radical military plotters, when they could have been easily dealt with, and the lawful government reinstated; the gratuitous British abandonment of Aden and the Persian Gulf; acquiescence in the confiscation of oil company rights in Libya, Algeria, and Iraq; supine acceptance of the breaking by OPEC countries, led by the shah, of their contracts with the oil companies; and, above all, allowing oil prices to be quadrupled arbitrarily and oil embargos to be instituted capriciously.

The last of these self-inflicted defeats dates from as long ago as the end of 1973. What is surprising is that so much time should have elapsed between the visible erosion of Western power and prestige in the Middle East and the inescapable conclusions the Soviet Union was bound to draw from this willfully self-destructive conduct. Such conclusions were all the more easy to draw since the Western powers allowed themselves to be out-manuevered and defeated by such puny and insignificant states as Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

The connection is clear between the series of events that began with the abandonment of Aden in 1968 and culminated in the OPEC coup at the end of 1973, and those events which inaugurated the present crisis. The Western powers, having divested themselves of all ability to defend their interests, contrived to shield themselves behind the might of two local states, Iran and Saudi Arabia. It did not take much knowledge or judgment to see that this policy was extremely hazardous. Neither state was of a caliber to stand up to the Soviet Union. Far from being able to provide protection for Western interests, they required a great deal of help and protection themselves. Further, their interests did not necessarily coincide with those of the West, nor was there much affinity between their outlook on international affairs and that of the West. Finally, the solidity of the regimes on which so much was being staked was highly doubtful.

However, such being the chosen allies, it was the height of folly not to be resolute and decisive in defending their regimes against all comers. The shah, however, was pressed and nagged in public on the issue of "human rights." His style was cramped, he had to lower his guard and give increasing scope to opponents whose contempt for human rights was equaled only by their eagerness to use a weapon with which the US administration was, with such unheeding generosity, providing them. Toward the end, the impression was strong that the shah's Western allies received his departure with relief. The shah agreed to go quietly and we approved his decision: so the US secretary of state informed the world, as though this was occasion, if not exactly for congratulation, then for thankfulness that an impediment and an embarrassment had been removed.

The shah's departure was, in reality, a great defeat for the US and her allies. But between Khomeini's triumphal return in February and the fall of the Tehran

embassy in November 1979, nothing was done to show the world that the US does not abandon its friends, or that the Western alliance does not accept defeat easily. Instead a vain and delusive research began for "moderates" in Tehran, confirming Iran's neighbors in the belief not only that the US was a weak, unpredictable, and treacherous friend, but also that its policies were backed neither by knowledge nor by sound judgment.

In the pursuit of its interests a state must, of course, deal with all kinds of regimes and all manner of people: so-called moderates, extremists, crooks, scoundrels, and terrorists. But to be profitable, such dealings must rest on an accurate estimate of the interests and position of one's interlocutors. These must also be made to have a proper respect for one's power; they must understand with certainty that a deal has to be mutually profitable, and that failure to reach agreement will result in penalties. In the Tehran of 1979 it was not a question of searching for moderates. The figures who surfaced in the wake of the shah's shipwreck were ideologues and visionaries who, as the sudden, unexpected, and total collapse of a regime created a completely fluid situation, were seized with vast cupidities and equally great fears. They were all jockeying for power, and looking nervously over their shoulders. Even had they wanted to, they were in no position to deliver the goods; no deal made with them would stick, especially since the stance adopted by the US was apologetic, if not positively self-incriminating and placatory.

Such a stance was in itself an encouragement, or rather an incitement, to attack the US embassy and take its inmates hostage. The response to this illegal and violent act has further damaged US interests not only in Iran, but in the Middle East and in NATO. The appeal to the UN and the International Court of Justice looked like a confession of weakness, while the great emphasis on securing the release of the hostages enhanced their value as bargaining counters and made their release more difficult. The pressure put on the NATO allies to enforce sanctions showed up their reluctance to do anything that might offend Iran, and therefore threw into question their resolution to stand up to a challenge that a far more formidable power than Iran might choose to issue. Notoriously, sanctions are a broken reed, and resorting to them is held to be either a piece of gimmickry or a sign of impotence. The damage they have done to the reputation and standing of the US has been compounded by the accompanying spectacle of allied disunity, and by the impression of sneering condescension that Europeans have given, as though they were humoring the whims of a rich but senile relation.

The issue for the US was not primarily the hostages. It was rather its posture in a vital region vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Sanctions are therefore doubly misguided: they will not secure the release of the hostages, and

they do nothing to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining control of the supply of oil. Soviet power is formidable, and naturally will be used to advance Soviet interests. Nothing will arrest it except countervailing power resolutely and visibly deployed. The chaos in Iran may well make that country the stage on which this perilous contest has to be resolved. It will have to be resolved in one of several ways: either the Soviet Union will extend its power and influence over the whole area, or a division of spheres between the two superpowers will develop, or war will break out owing to a miscalculation similar to the German one in 1914. At any rate, if the US will not or cannot do it, there is no power able to stop the USSR.

The invasion of Afghanistan makes this blindingly clear. The Soviets must have reckoned that no harm would come to them thereby, and so far the calculation seems to be right. Whatever happens at the Moscow Olympics, the attempt to organize a boycott has brought to the surface divisions within the Western camp, the exploitation of which may compensate for the absence from the Games of some Western teams. The Olympics affair has also made manifest widespread popular illusions about the Soviets which may, in an emergency, cramp the style of Western leaders and further sap their resolution. In any case, boycott of the Olympics, even if wholly successful, will not modify the balance of military power. Neither will US economic sanctions against the USSR have much immediate effect. The value of both sanctions and boycott lies in signaling American determination to resist Soviet expansion. But the expression of this new resolve—such as it is—has elicited in Western Europe marked reactions, smacking of defeatism, which the Soviets no doubt will try to exploit.

Afghanistan also led to a flurry of US diplomatic activity in Asia. Pakistan, with whom relations were strained, and where the US embassy recently had been set on fire, became the object of urgent and effusive approaches which were quickly spurned. For the US this may have been a blessing in disguise. Pakistan was neither able nor willing to confront the Soviets in Afghanistan. Hence there was no advantage in the US's tying its interests to those of a military regime which, aware of its illegitimacy, and naturally concerned first and foremost with its own survival, could not be expected to look on resistance to Soviet expansion as its first priority. For the US to rely on Zia to act as a shield against the Soviets would have been a mistake of the same kind as that committed with the shah, only much more grievous.

The US was saved from the consequences of such a mistake by Zia. But since his actions do not stem from any tenderness for the US, it must follow that he did not attach much value to friendship with what is, after all, still one of the two superpowers. Pakistan's attitude emphasizes how weak the American stance has become in the Middle East, and the public advertisement of such

an attitude cannot but weaken it further.

Another similar development, which followed the invasion of Afghanistan, underscores this point even more strongly. Saudi Arabia and the sheikhdoms of the Gulf must view this event with the greatest misgiving and fear. They know what valuable booty they constitute, and must also know that they are powerless to defend themselves against Soviet designs. But they do not hasten to invite, or even simply to welcome, an American presence in the area. On the contrary, they declare their unwillingness to receive American forces, and distance themselves in public from the only power that can protect them. It is as though America were an embarrassing and undesirable acquaintance, whose friendship is disclaimed and whose contact is shunned. Turkey, to take another striking instance, is an ally, and yet Turkey had to deny that US planes engaged in an attempt to free American nationals illegally detained in Iran had used Turkish air space.

The Afghanistan crisis has also given rise to hopes that this would provide the means and the occasion for uniting the whole of the Moslem world against the Soviet Union. Such hopes were misplaced. The Moslem world is not a monolith. It displays a tremendous variety of conflicting interests and ideologies, and it is impossible to imagine all Moslem states acting in unison. And even if, to assume the impossible, all Moslem states were united in hostility to Soviet policy, by what mechanism would this hostility be translated into action? The Moslem world does not have the military power or the scientific and industrial resources to reckon with the Soviets, today or in any foreseeable future. Just as UN General Assembly resolutions in no way will deflect the Soviet Union from its designs, so neither will even the most solemn and emphatic disapproval a conclave of Islamic states can devise and utter.

Some influential figures in the Common Market have taken a somewhat different line on Afghanistan. Their argument is not so much that the Moslem world can be conscripted to resist the Soviets. It is rather that the Moslem states, and the Arab states in particular, cannot be induced to support the West in its quarrel with the Soviet Union unless they are given satisfaction over Palestine. The force of such an argument is not readily apparent. Just like the Moslem states in general, the Arab states, even were they to act together, are powerless to deflect Soviet moves. But they cannot act together, and some of them indeed are either in the Soviet camp or loath to act against the Soviets. The Arab states are riven by conflicts and consumed by mutual suspicions. Nor is it apparent what giving them satisfaction over Palestine might entail, since they by no means desire or envisage an identical outcome to the Arab-Israeli conflict. These facts are well known, indeed obvious, and one is thus led to suspect that the argument may disguise ulterior motives: that it is put forward for the sake of commercial benefits (say to obtain contracts for the sale of arms and other goods) or

else in the hope that it might secure a guaranteed supply of oil.

Such motives are short-sighted, since oil and oil prices are now exclusively within the suppliers' control. It is foolish to expect that supplies can be made secure through the consumers satisfying the suppliers' demands in respect of any particular issue. Where the imbalance between suppliers and consumers is so great, nothing can prevent suppliers from making and enforcing demands over an endless series of issues. It is likewise foolish for the industrial consumers to go on trying to sell the arms and other goods they produce in the hope of thus paying for their oil. Since the suppliers can raise prices at will, such a policy condemns consumers to a perpetual treadmill. The only safe course is to reestablish the balance between supplier and consumer which was destroyed in the early 1970s. This can be done only by breaking the OPEC monopoly, and this monopoly can be destroyed only by political and military means. But the thought of such action, whether undertaken by themselves or by the US, profoundly appalls most Common Market leaders, vulnerable as they are to a defeatism so deep that it inevitably recalls the 1930s and the war that followed.

When it is said that satisfaction has to be given to the Arabs over Palestine before they will consent to make common cause with the West, what is meant is that Israel is to be made to negotiate with the PLO and, ultimately, agree to a PLO-led state in the West Bank. It is well known that Israel adamantly resists such a policy and would not be easily compelled to become a party to it. The tension such a situation might generate would be likely to increase rather than diminish the instability of the region, and perhaps end in a holocaust with incalculable consequences.

A PLO solution to the Palestine problem also would endanger the Jordanian regime, one of the few Arab regimes friendly to the West. It may thus also have undesirable consequences for Saudi Arabia, which could find itself encircled by radical regimes in whom ideological conviction is fueled by envy of Saudi wealth.

To bring the Palestine problem to the forefront and to subordinate all other issues to its solution seems the repetition of the blunder whereby for a decade—from 1938 to 1948—British Middle Eastern policy assumed that British interests depended on a solution in Palestine acceptable to the Arabs. The proposition was false; anyway, no solution acceptable to the Arabs could be enforced.

Of course, a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is in the Western interest. Such a settlement may come about not by activism, but precisely as a consequence of foreswearing an active search for it. The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, if it holds, means that Egypt will no longer form part of an anti-Israeli coalition. This in turn means that the outbreak of a new Arab-Israeli war becomes much less likely, and the less likely the prospects of such a war, the more likely will Israel's Arab neighbors be willing to consider a settlement

through negotiations. This is an occasion where doing nothing is wiser than the attempt to do something, the outcome of which is obscure and possibly hazardous, and in which the consequences for the real issues confronting the West, namely the Soviet challenge and the supply and price of oil, are by no means self-evident.

There is another, equally powerful reason for avoiding exertion over the Palestine problem. Though Egypt has now made peace with Israel, it is by no means clear that it has given up the ambition to lead the Arab world, an ambition which led both Farouk and Nasser to play a leading role in the struggle against Zionism and Israel. If the issue of Palestine were to be raised—whether through an attempt to modify Security Council Resolution 242, or an attempt to obtain a so-called comprehensive settlement—then President Sadat may well give in to the pressure or the temptation to resume the role which Farouk and Nasser had played so disastrously and for so long.

The line of Western policy which would actively join the Palestine issue now betokens a restless and dangerous quest for schemes and combinations which, soberly considered, are both shaky and profitless: to satisfy the PLO is to satisfy the Arabs, to satisfy the Arabs is to have them on our side, to have them on our side is . . . what? To compel the evacuation of Afghanistan? To deter the Soviets? To secure the supply of oil? At prices which do not irresistibly go up?

These combinations, however, are not the only ones afoot. Now that Iran, one of the twin pillars of US policy in the Middle East, has been toppled, there is talk of a new pillar to replace it: Iraq. Iraq is said to be stable, powerful, and not averse to establishing a connection with the West which would enable it to balance Soviet influence. But the Iraqi option is open to even more disadvantages than the Iranian one. If the shah's regime was mortal, has his neighbor's discovered the elixir of eternal life? Again, the price of such a connection is support of Iraq's ambitions in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula—ambitions which those regimes now most friendly to the West are bound to fear. Sooner or later such a policy will require a Western ally to choose between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Why bring the necessity of such a choice down on oneself? The Baghdad Pact, so much more advantageous in terms of bases and military arrangements than anything likely to be obtained now, threatened before its demise to embroil Great Britain in profitless and dangerous regional quarrels. Is it likely to be different now? The real reason for all these agitations is the profound reluctance of Western powers to do what is required in order to protect their own interests: namely, to make their strength visible and respected. Only they can reestablish the balance which past illusions and fecklessness allowed to be upset. They have to abandon vain imaginings, and to be persuaded that nobody will do for them what they fail to do for themselves.

Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Singing the Body Electric

Explosion time. About five minutes after *Fame* began, I began to feel the pressure building in the big theater where I was seeing it. I hadn't felt anything quite like it since the first production of *Hair* at the Public Theater in 1967 where, long before intermission, I thought the walls of the high-ceilinged hall would simply go. Not with noise, with young energy. *Fame* threatens the walls of its theater the same way: not with the (good) stereo sound, not with the rock beat—not alone, anyway—but with young energy. I'll make a deal with the rest of the world: you keep *Star Wars* and all the sequels, with their special-effect, lab-coddled cosmic powers, and I'll take the *real* cosmic powers of these kids.

The High School of Performing Arts in New York accepts students with gifts in dance or music or acting and trains them in those fields at the same time that they get the standard four-year education. *Fame* begins with the entrance auditions, then has a section for each year as it follows some students through, and concludes with graduation. The opening has echoes of *A Chorus Line*, therefore echoes of that show's antecedent, Joseph Chaikin's *Mutation Show*, where prospective performers delve into themselves. Christopher Gore's screenplay is decked with plastic curls. When a girl applies as a dancer and says that the fellow with her is not applying, that he's just partnering her for the audition, we know he's the one who's going to be accepted. When a student (that dancer, by the way) has a running fight with a woman English teacher through the film, we know they're going to end up in friendship. A Puerto Rican boy, an acting student who is the least engaging character in the picture and has the most screen time, makes a hit in his debut as a stand-up comic in a small club then later bombs

out; and he goes through the stock letdown in the stock dingy dressing-room.

But all that stuff, and more, has the same relation to *Fame* that *recitative* has to 19th-century opera: it connects and makes possible the numbers. The film has a double point: the talent of these students, the ambition of these students. (None of the leads is actually a student: they're all young professionals.) Those two qualities are like the poles in a carbon-arc spotlight: they make the picture flare.

So we hear Irene Cara singing "Out Here on My Own" with nuance and heart; we see the hot kinetics of Gene Anthony Ray's body, so sexy that he turns on the women teachers who audition him, we see the flowing gold-and-pearl of Antonia Franceschi's ballet work, we see and hear dozens of other young musicians and dancers, all bursting. Louis Falco, choreographer for Alvin Ailey and others, has devised "extemporaneous" outbursts of dance—in the school cafeteria and the street outside (not the actual school building) that are rock at its most infectious. The implication of these numbers is that rock underlies the beings of all these young people, chamber musicians and Shakespeareans, too: it's their *lingua franca*. Falco makes it believable and fine. The good score is by Michael Gore, with a smashing graduation number built on Whitman's "I Sing the Body Electric."

The art in this high school that comes off the worst in terms of display is, inevitably, acting. Of the three arts involved, acting is the hardest to learn, master, and show: the acting equivalent of, say, Franceschi's dancing doesn't often come at Franceschi's age. Bits of plays are seen, including one funny scene of the rehearsal of a Russian play in the snowy schoolyard, but the director, Alan Parker, doesn't try for

virtuoso splashes of acting as he does with music and dance. This obviously has nothing to do with the acting in the film itself, which is mostly better than competent—especially Anne Meara as the embattled English teacher and Maureen Teefy as a duckling who becomes a swan. In counterpoint to the roller-coaster feelings of the students is the steadiness of their teachers, particularly Jim Moody, the acting teacher, and Albert Hague, the musician, who impress us as strong, patient, and basically very happy.

Not many pictures depend so openly on their editing as *Fame* does, and unlike the over-embroidered, nervous-making snipping of *All That Jazz*, the editing here helps to fix and forward everything. Parker and his editor Gerry Hambling developed an editing and shooting vocabulary which soon becomes clear but which always clicks: a loud scene followed sharply by a quiet one and vice versa; mosaics of work around the school spliced between major sequences, often over the soundtrack of the next upcoming major sequence; a cut to a close-up that's unrelated to the sequence ahead of it—an object or face—then a pullback by the camera as we slide into the next phase. The interweavings—a dozen or so stories go forward at the same time—are tight because all those stories have the same centers,

Films Worth Seeing

Best Boy. Love and reticence shine in this quiet documentary about a 52-year-old retarded man and his aging parents, especially in his unforgettable mother.

Kramer vs. Kramer. If you've seen it, don't see it again: the script evanesces. But the first time around, the acting is fine enough to sustain it.

My Brilliant Career. Spirit, charm, wit—all the things you never expected in an Australian film. A girl of the 1890s strikes out on the road of independence.

Norma Rae. Released again because of Sally Field's Oscar. Besides her heartening performance, this is the best 1935 picture we are likely to get this decade, a real rouser.

SK

literally and figuratively: the school and the drive.

Parker and his producer, Alan Marshall, are long-time collaborators, veterans of over 500 TV commercials before they made their first feature. I didn't know their background when I saw their last film, *Midnight Express*, which was about a young American imprisoned in Turkey on drug charges and which I thought was a hyped-up fake agony. Doubtless I'd have used their TV-commercial background as a club against them, but it's just that shorthand hustle, the lush laying-it-in-your-lap that gives *Fame* its fortune. It's nothing like a vertical film, even in those moments when it weakly tries to be; it's horizontal, a forward-motion storm.

What's especially interesting is that both Parker and Marshall are English. (So is David Greene, who did the spirited Manhattan film of *Godspell*.) It's long-exploded nonsense that only a native director can use a location. The point here is that two Englishmen have understood a film that couldn't possibly have taken place anywhere else. There may be similar schools in other cities, in other countries, but *Fame* is not just American, it's New York. These two men understood that: understood something of what this city means to the rest of the country, to the world.

The New York theater world as it is today (I've written about this elsewhere)

comes out of New York City as it is today—brawling, dirty, dangerous, fiercely and combatively vital. The WASPs and Jews and blacks and Puerto Ricans and Chinese in this school are statistically available elsewhere but not dynamically. Very shrewdly Parker puts the school (against the fact) on a side street off Broadway: when the kids pour out for their street rock number, the Main Stem (remember that name?) is only half a block away. It's afternoon, and the whole district looks like the world capital of Clutch. It's also still the world capital of adolescent show-biz ambition and fantasy, even in the aged.

Fame is absolutely about its title, not about the arts it's dealing with. Almost all the talent in the picture is revving up for a zoom to the glitzy top. The film opens with a close-up of a photograph of Olivier as Othello, then the camera pulls back to reveal the acting auditions, but that photograph is from a different planet. Little in this film has anything to do with what made Olivier what he was. (Let's forget the tail-end of his career.) Little in this film has anything to do with anything except Making It. (I mean the film, not the real NY high school.) That's what gives the picture hustle. That's what makes it corny and slight when it tries to create character. And that's what makes it truthful—maybe more truthful than it set out to be—about the performing arts in Fever City.

The other built-in success factor is that the species is really a subgenre of a time-tested Broadway artifact—The Play You Are Not Allowed to Dislike. In the past, this used to be a political drama—people resisting a corrupt political system, or fighting for the loyalist cause during the Spanish Civil War. More recently, it has featured almost exclusively ethnic and sexual minorities, thus increasing the quota of moral extortion. To fail to respond to plays about blacks or women or homosexuals, for example, is to be vulnerable to charges of racism, sexism, homophobia, or getting up on the wrong side of the bed. Now that the handicapped have organized themselves into another minority pressure group, they have access to the same kind of blackmail. Meanwhile, the theater becomes another agency for consciousness raising, with audiences being alternately tutored and entertained for considerably less than a healthy contribution to an effective rehabilitation program.

Medoff's version of this formula is partly successful because it combines the features of two current offerings you are forbidden to dislike: the disability play and the feminist play. Its male hero is James Leeds, a speech therapist who works in a clinic for the "non-hearing" (the word *deaf* having been consigned to the same dusty lexicon of archaic English as *Negro* and *Mrs.*). One of his charges is a feisty woman named Sarah Norman, deaf and dumb since birth, who absolutely refuses to learn to speak or read lips (they communicate entirely through signing). Not only this, she dislikes everybody who does, including the baffled Leeds, who can't understand why the recalcitrant Sarah continues to refuse his help. Nevertheless, he continues to offer it, and, endlessly, to discuss it (*help* is the most frequently uttered word of the play). A former Peace Corps officer, he is attracted to support occupations "because it feels good to help people." When he goes to bed with Sarah, it feels even better, and his efforts at helping enter a new phase.

Eventually, they get married. Leeds, who leans toward pop psychoanalysis, concludes that Sarah's hatred of "hearing" people is related to her hatred of herself, while she confesses that she has refused his therapy because "I don't do things I don't do well." Although sex is not among these (she has had an active history before she married him), the two soon fall to quarreling. He hasn't turned

Robert Brustein on theater

The Play You Are Not Allowed to Dislike

Mark Medoff's *Children of a Lesser God* (Longacre) is a supreme example of a new Broadway genre—the Disability Play. The origin of the species, I suppose, was William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker*, written 20 years ago—but only following the success of such recent extensions of the formula as *The Elephant Man* and *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*, has the Disability Play taken Broadway by storm as its dominant "serious" drama. It's not hard to understand the success of the genre, since it has everything going for it: 1) Unforgettable Characters, including spastics, paraplegics, the deaf, and the blind; 2) Intriguing Conflict, between the handicapped protagonist and the "normal" person who invites contempt

by trying to help; 3) Love Reversal, the moment the conflict between these two characters ends in an embrace; 4) Terrific Breakthrough, when the protagonist reveals that he/she can speak/feel/read lips/walk; and 5) Inspirational Theme, after we learn we all share a common humanity, regardless of our defects. The impact of this on the tear ducts is dynamite. I haven't seen audiences leaving a theater with such glistening faces since the last revival of Bette Davis in *Dark Victory*, or perhaps since Peter Sellers rose from his wheelchair in *Doctor Strangelove* (after a ferocious struggle with his mechanical hand) to announce to the American president, "Mein Führer, I can walk."

on his stereo in months, and she seems more interested in fighting for the rights of "non-hearing" people than in the marriage. These personal battles lead to two dramatic revelations. His is an admission that he feels guilty over the suicide of his mother, not surprisingly since it occurred right after he announced to the unfortunate woman that if he lived with her for one more day, he would put a gun to one of their heads. Hers arrives when he forces her to utter sounds, and she confesses that she has been reading lips for years. In a scene you may recognize from about 50 other plays (beginning with *A Doll's House*), she then tells her husband that until she becomes an "individual," "we cannot be joined, we cannot share a relationship." The payoff comes when Leeds, after trying to help Sarah for the whole length of the play, is forced to admit his own dependency ("Help me—teach me . . . be brave, but not so brave that you don't need me anymore"). She leaves anyway. Will she return? Tune in tomorrow. In the ambiguous conclusion, Sarah reaches out to James in a half-light, signing, "I'll help you if you help me," following which the spectators helped themselves to their handkerchiefs and I helped myself to my coat.

Obviously, only a stony heart could remain cold to such a story, especially when it is delivered with such conviction by the two principal actors, John Rubenstein and Phyllis Frelich. Rubenstein, who has the sharp angular features of a young Fred Astaire, carries the burden of virtually the entire play on his talented shoulders, since he not only speaks his own lines but translates Miss Frelich's signs as well. This double task he discharges with such wit and passion that he almost succeeds in forcing some suppleness into the cardboard goody two shoes he is forced to impersonate. As for Miss Frelich, she is an accomplished mime, with a mischievous smile and an instinct for deviltry that remind one of Harpo Marx, and she demonstrates how well spiritual beauty and intelligence can be manifested without the aid of speech. Indeed, the whole play is a good argument for the return of the silent film. Expertly crafted, and directed with considerable skill (by Gordon Davidson), it successfully disguises its soap-opera origins by being a chic compendium of every extant cliché about women and minority groups, where speech operates not to inform and reveal but rather to manipulate emotions and reinforce

conventional wisdom.

Watching this, I began to think what a nice number Frederick Nietzsche or D. H. Lawrence or H. L. Mencken or even W. C. Fields would have done on *Children of a Lesser God*. After seeing *The Roast* (Winter Garden), I realized that all it needed was a good old-fashioned Jewish comedian (not Jerry Lewis). This piece expired after four performances, and probably deserved its fate, since it had a very poor excuse for a plot and a central conflict (between a successful older comedian and his disillusioned protégé) which seemed to have been pumped into the script with an air hose. Still, the writing was so downright tasteless, ornery, and vicious I found it impossible not to open my heart to it.

The scene is a stag roast honoring a distinguished comedian as "Humanitarian of the Decade" (you won't find him hard to identify since he helps crippled children), before he is exposed as a publicity-seeking, self-interested phony. The evening consists almost entirely of routines, and the entertainment is provided by a number of thinly disguised American comics—I recognized resemblances to Bill Cosby, Zero Mostel, Groucho Marx, Lenny Bruce, and Sid Caesar. Entirely unbuttoned, the comedy numbers deliver a series of racial, personal, and ethnic insults that successfully manage to offend just about everybody living in America today: "Just like the good old days," remarks one of the comics, "no

censors—anything could be said—and it was live!" "The good old days," in fact, is the nostalgic theme of the evening ("when we'd all get drunk, throw a sheet over Shelly Winters, and show movies on her ass"), probably because that was a time when subjects could be confronted head-on without colliding with well-meaning social and moral guardians. Interestingly, the sexual jokes mostly have to do with self-abuse ("the good thing about masturbation is when you're finished, you don't have to send your hand home in a cab"), auto-eroticism ("I know a character who was arrested in a hotel room for sodomy—and he was alone at the time"), or impotence (the old comedian tells us he sits for hours waiting for a "soft-on")—reflecting the fact that classic Jewish comedy is erotic much less often than it is self-ironic, if not emetic. These are characters, in short, whom the sexual revolution has completely passed by, along with all the other fashionable insurrections of our time.

Carl Reiner has directed this short-lived work with the same jaded sensibility he brought to *Where's Papa?* and *Your Show of Shows*—also, unfortunately, with the same sense of contrivance he brought to *Oh God!* He is the Old Testament prophet of show biz, the Savonarola of fakery. Inside this successful comedy writer and director, there's a terrible fury waiting to be born. Considering the state of our current theater, I sure hope it gets out soon.

Can books survive the book business?

The Future of the Book

by Lewis Coser

A new battle of the books is under way. It is centered on the fact that over the last 15 years several leading publishing houses have been taken over by conglomerates that are dedicated to making money rather than to producing meritorious books. Publishers always

Lewis Coser, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at SUNY, Stony Brook, is working on a study of the publishing industry with Walter W. Powell and Charles Kadushin to be published next year by Basic Books.

have been concerned, of course, with making a profit. But opponents of the recent rash of takeovers and mergers argue that in the past publishers tried to balance their commercial imperatives and their cultural responsibilities by paying for good books of limited market appeal with the proceeds of their commercially successful books. In this way, as E. L. Doctorow, speaking for the writers' organization, PEN, recently put it, "they could make money and be proud of their contribution to literature and ideas at the same time." What is

happening now, so the critics contend, is that those who direct the large corporate enterprises that have absorbed many of the old houses care only for those books likely to sell on a mass scale. The hard-headed businessmen who run these corporations, so Bernard Malamud has argued, endanger "the integrity of the trade." A recent New York City symposium organized under the auspices of PEN and the Center for Civil Liberties of New York University was convened under the title, "Can Books Survive the Book Business?"

What is all the fuss about? After all, the book business in America always has been oriented toward the mass market, and criticisms of its blatant commercialism have been heard for more than a century. A reviewer for the prestigious *North American Review* could write in 1843, "Literature begins to assume the aspect and undergo the mutations of trade. The author's profession is becoming as mechanical as that of the printer. . . ." In 1905, the *Atlantic Monthly* carried an article on "The Commercialization of Literature" by the dean of American publishing, Henry Holt, in which he argued that "lately American publishers were as crazy about advertising as the Dutch were about tulips . . . [so that it has become] more and more difficult to get books that are not 'sellers' fairly before the public." And James Farrell wrote in 1946 that "the direction now being taken by the big publishers has been described as the Hollywoodization of literature." Farrell feared that "Wall Street control will mean that Money, Pure Money, becomes the boss." Despite these historical antecedents, however, present developments have a character all their own.

Until very recently, publishing was largely a cottage industry, but during the unprecedented boom of the 1960s it became attractive to Wall Street. With the shock of Sputnik and the large increases in college enrollments brought by the postwar baby boom, government expenditures for education, library budgets, and scientific research skyrocketed. The publishing industry flourished as never before. Many established houses went public to raise capital for expansion or were purchased by communication companies such as RCA, ITT, IBM, Xerox, and Raytheon. Other established houses, such as Macmillan or Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, embarked on expansions of their own and branched out into the communication industry and other businesses. These mergers, takeovers,

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and expansions did not reduce diversity in publishing. They did, however, result in overproduction. The book market became glutted. Furthermore, not all firms shared alike in the industry's growth; the larger firms grew at a much faster clip. These firms, with better access to capital resources, became streamlined and were for the first time able to exploit the cost-reducing techniques of modern management.

The wave of mergers and takeovers that is still cresting started in the mid-1970s and had quite different causes. Instead of being impelled by hopes for future expansion, publishers were reacting to declining sales and profits in a period of financial stringency. Inflation, increasing interest rates, and rising production costs made the remaining independent firms look for ways of strengthening their position through mergers within the industry or through selling out to conglomerates. Hardcover houses acquired soft-cover houses, media conglomerates extended their hold over publishing houses, and foreign companies, mainly German and British, bought into the American paperback market. Hollywood attempted to gain footholds in New York. Gulf and Western, owner of Paramount Pictures, purchased Simon & Schuster and its paperback subsidiary Pocket Books, and the Music Corporation of America, owners of Universal Pictures, which already owned both a hard-cover and soft-cover house, took over Putnam.

It is these recent trends that have aroused the anxieties of many authors as well as of organizations such as the Authors' Guild and PEN. E. L. Doctorow sums up these fears when he writes: "Regardless of the good intentions of the people working in publishing, . . . the narrowing of divergent decision-making power into fewer corporate organizations, either American or foreign-owned . . . provides the structure for a time when enlightenment will no longer prevail. . . ." Certainly Doctorow's fear has solid grounds. There remains only a handful of houses in the paperback industry that count. These houses compete furiously for scarce space on the display racks in airports, drugstores, and supermarkets. As a result, the days when one could buy paperback editions of Faulkner or Hemingway in such outlets are long over. Instead, each house aims at pushing blockbusters. Huge sums of money, often way above a million dollars, now are offered for

paperback reprint rights for books that are judged to appeal to a wide public and the lowest possible common denominator of taste. In such an oligopolistic market, smaller publishers can no longer compete. The recent rise of large chain stores such as B. Dalton and Walden Book Company, which concentrate largely on best sellers, has had similar effects.

The situation in textbook publishing is equally disturbing. The production of a modern introductory textbook, with its lavish illustrations, its multiple color schemes, its wide distribution of free copies as a come-on, requires immense outlays long before even a single copy has been sold. As a result, smaller textbook houses have been pushed to the wall, and a handful of major houses now dominate the scene.

Hard-cover trade publishing, however, presents a different picture. Generally less profitable than other branches of the industry, it does not seem to have been a victim of concentration to anything like the same degree. Although many formerly privately owned houses now are under the

corporate yoke, most heads of houses have been successful in resisting the pressures of their corporate parents. In addition, the low capital cost of entry makes it still possible for new small firms to establish a toehold in the market. What Roger W. Straus Jr., president of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, the distinguished independent publisher, says about the whole industry might well apply to the publication of hard-cover trade books:

Conglomerates will regurgitate their book company purchases as they realize that publishing can never be the kind of growth industry that allows for an annual percentage increase or rate of profit comparable to one-product businesses. It is hard to rationalize the hard-cover trade business when, given the great variety of products turned out annually, no market research is possible, so that each particular book has to be sold individually.

Recently, a representative of a conglomerate that had just acquired a prestigious hard-cover house visited one of its senior editors and asked how many books he had "produced" during the current financial year. When he was

SUNDAY MATINEE

Two by two, after the concert,
They walk out into the snow
In their bright coats,
Bright red and brown.
The music has inspired them.
The words from the cycle of songs
Were a little overdone, romantic,
But the music made them sound true,
Lifting the spirits of the couples
Too high for their low rooms;
So they stroll, arm in arm,
About the town, enjoying the fresh colors
Of the wooden houses, accepting
The chimney smoke as a lucky sign.
They're happy that today is Sunday
And the stores are closed.
At the window of the hardware store
They stop to admire a beautiful
Brass spool, spotless as a fossil
From the ocean floor, quiet
As rock-like desert toad.
Why should this item move once
In a thousand years if it's never restless,
Never bored, if it knows
All that it wants to know?
Foreign as it is, it's no more foreign
Than this afternoon, which is here now,
Blooming in the flesh before them,
And already behind glass,
Farther than yesterday or the day before.

Carl Dennis

told: "None," the man burst out: "You mean we pay you \$35,000 for producing nothing?" It had to be explained to him that the distinguished editor had indeed signed up some first-rate books, but that these "products" would not be published for another year or two. . . . This kind of thing goes against the grain of the corporate mentality. Under these circumstances, the honeymoon between the conglomerates and the hard-cover trade publishing industry may turn out to be nasty, brutish, and short. The fact that RCA recently sold Random House, Knopf, and Pantheon to a chain of newspaper publishers may well be the first straw in the wind.

In recent years economists and sociologists have spoken of a "dual labor market," that is, of a situation where, contrary to orthodox labor-market theory, there exist two distinct labor markets. One of these consists of the modern mass industries with largely oligopolistic features and with relatively high wage rates. The other market is that of small firms which must offer much lower wages if they wish to survive in their highly competitive specialized industries. Something like this also may be going on in the publishing industry—with product

differentiation rather than wage rates. The mass paperback industry, much of textbook publishing, both on the high school and on the college level, and other profitable and rationalized aspects of publishing will become highly concentrated, largely controlled by outside interests, and governed by the quest for high profits. The mass paperback firms in particular will continue to gear their operations to the blockbuster, the novelization of Hollywood films, the media tie-ins, the high-pressure marketing of how-to books, and the production of glossy-jacketed paperbacks of gothic romance. Such books will be marketed through media ballyhoo, talk shows, and sexy advertisements. Producers of this trendy literature will pay more attention to the jacket than to the content, and to advertising budgets rather than to reviews.

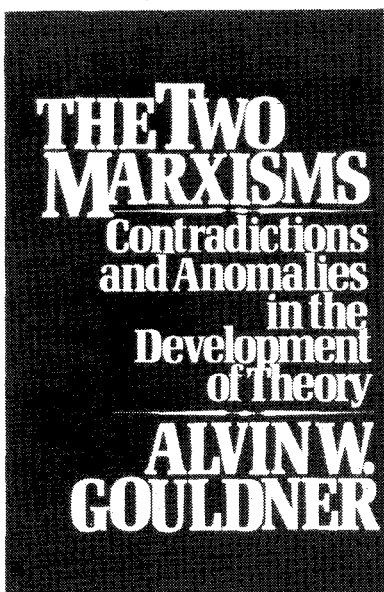
But there will continue to be another market for serious hard-cover books and quality paperbacks that will be much less susceptible, given its unrationalized aspects, to media hype and six-figure advances (even though some authors will, of course, be able to cash in on both markets). In this sector, smaller independent houses still may have a good chance of survival, just as many smaller

firms with specialized products have survived the coming of the industrial giants. The current profit squeeze and the high rates of interest certainly have made things difficult for such houses, but although some have gone under or have been absorbed, a number of new firms also have appeared.

Some firms, to be sure, have become large, vertically integrated complexes with a hand in all, or most, aspects of publishing. Doubleday, for instance, a major hard-cover trade house, also owns the paperback imprint Anchor Press, and at least 12 book clubs, including the Literary Guild. Harper & Row has large trade, juvenile, college, and high school divisions, owns Basic Books, Barnes and Noble, the college division of Dodd and Mead, and has just absorbed the trade houses Lippincott and Crowell. In such large, integrated houses there may be pressures to neglect the relatively less profitable hard-cover trade books in favor of more profitable operations in other divisions, but I have seen little evidence of this.

Nowadays most hard-cover books will make a sizable profit only if subsidiary rights are successfully sold to book clubs, paperback houses, or the media. In this sense, the hard-cover quality

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houses have become dependent on the mass market. Yet the struggle to acquire subsidiary rights now is as fierce as ever. Even paperback subsidiaries of hard-cover houses compete with outsiders for rights to hard-cover books. As long as this trend continues, and I see no sign of its abating, hard-cover trade houses will, if they desire, be able to resist homogenizing tendencies. Yet a sharp decline in the paperback reprint market would have very serious consequences

for hard-cover publishing.

The days of the cottage industry in publishing are gone, and the last gentlemanly publishers are passing rapidly from the scene. But as long as some 40,000 new books continue to be published in the United States each year, the chances are high that a certain proportion of them will continue to be marketed to a culturally specialized public that remains relatively impervious to the mass-market fare.

Jack: The Struggles of John F. Kennedy by Herbert S. Parmet

(Dial; \$14.95)

By the time they're through digging and peering under skirts, it may turn out that *none* of the Kennedys was fit for the presidency. Bobby, with his mousy exterior and vulpine heart, was not even the type for elective office: a heap of ground had to be cleared for the able little fellow. Teddy lacked even the minimum fanaticism to say, after Chapquiddick, "I shall never have another drink," which would have turned the trick as near as certain.

So far, a pious plodder and incurable cut-up: par for any big rich family, with or without a legend. As for Jack, Herbert Parmet's book makes it ponderously clear that he carried at least the family ration of disabilities. Apart from his love affairs which, for all he knew, could have linked him with every spy-ring in Europe, not to mention the Mob, he was much too sick to be president. Nothing in our naughty era has been covered up more thoroughly than Jack's health. Indeed, the only time that his lifelong shuttle to the hospital was aired was when his people needed an excuse for his absence during the McCarthy censure debate. But according to Parmet, he really did belong in the hospital at that stage, as he did most of the time.

Parmet is a man of few points, but he makes them often. Just to break us in, he tells us ad nauseum that older brother Joe was gregarious, and that little Jack was not. Jack was bookish and sickly, Joe was hearty to the edge of bullying. Joe was his daddy's favorite, and the vulgar force of the clan, which was not always attractive, was transmitted through him to the lower ranks. Such a political family could

hardly avoid being run a little bit like a club house.

Jack had all the makings of an outsider, the un-Kennedy Kennedy—except that you couldn't get outside the Kennedys, without running straight into Father Joe. "I want my kids to grow up and spit in my eye" he said, and he would have applauded the spit. Thus, even if Jack wrote something contrary to the old man's views, Joe would wangle to get it published, wangle some more to win it a Pulitzer, and in short do everything but hawk it on the Boston Common.

This did not mean that you got a free ride at home. Every inch had to be argued and fought for. Only in public did the clan become a clan. Then the worst argument of a Kennedy became better than anyone else's best. Jack noted once that if he'd become a communist leader, his red-hating father would have gone along cheerfully.

Such a patriarch has a subtle hold on his young, as many an Irish son can attest. You don't want to go against him, you don't want to test his trust and tap the family loyalty, which is like an emergency tank. Jack, as one might suppose, compromised best. Psychologically he distanced himself by aloofness. The patriarch's hold becomes intolerable if you are seduced by mellowness, or by the deadly fellowship of the jar (see Eugene O'Neill, *passim*). Jack, significantly, hardly drank at all.

Intellectually, he set up his own shop as early as his teens, while following the family rubric of writing everything down for his father's inspection (his letters from the Middle East discussing

Zionism, etc., and written before World War II, make perhaps the strongest claim for his political intelligence in the entire book). In practical politics he was more cautious. One might be tempted to say that he used his father unconscionably. Joe positively insisted on it. In particular, Jack was careful not to offend his father's political base, e.g., in the matter of Joe McCarthy, while somehow concealing from his liberal fans the really scandalous truth: that he personally rather liked Joe McCarthy and enjoyed his crudeness. Perhaps even worse, he got on OK with young Richard Nixon. (These strange friendships that web Washington seem to shock partisans more than real issues, but are stoutly protected by the will to disbelieve.)

Jack knew exactly where his father could help and where he couldn't—and so, up to a point, did his father. Joe was a liability from way back: the guy who makes the money that buys the education often is. But Jack played him like a master, remaining in essence the fond, amused son who has obviously moved on himself, but is too well-adjusted to disown the past. Jerry Brown should take lessons. Joe's friends loved Jack; Joe's enemies thought, well at least that's a graceful way to handle a difficult parent. Meanwhile, Joe delivered the old-line back room support, which was accepted, while Jack became a liberal's darling on the side.

But this *modus operandi* is a family secret, shared by all the boys, and clearly taught by Joe himself. The founding father, raised on the boundary between the Brahmins and the Micks, was super-sensitive to slights, and he usually knew when to get out of the way (although he misread the slippery Adlai Stevenson, and made serious trouble for Jack there).

What made Jack more than just another Kennedy is more elusive. Besides a list of his sicknesses, as lugubrious as a hospital chart, and of his other beddings—possibly stimulated by cortisone, the author suggests parenthetically—Parmet gives a most thorough account of Jack's listless career on the Hill, where he quite simply didn't seem to like his work much. He made a few

Coming:

John Canaday on Picasso.

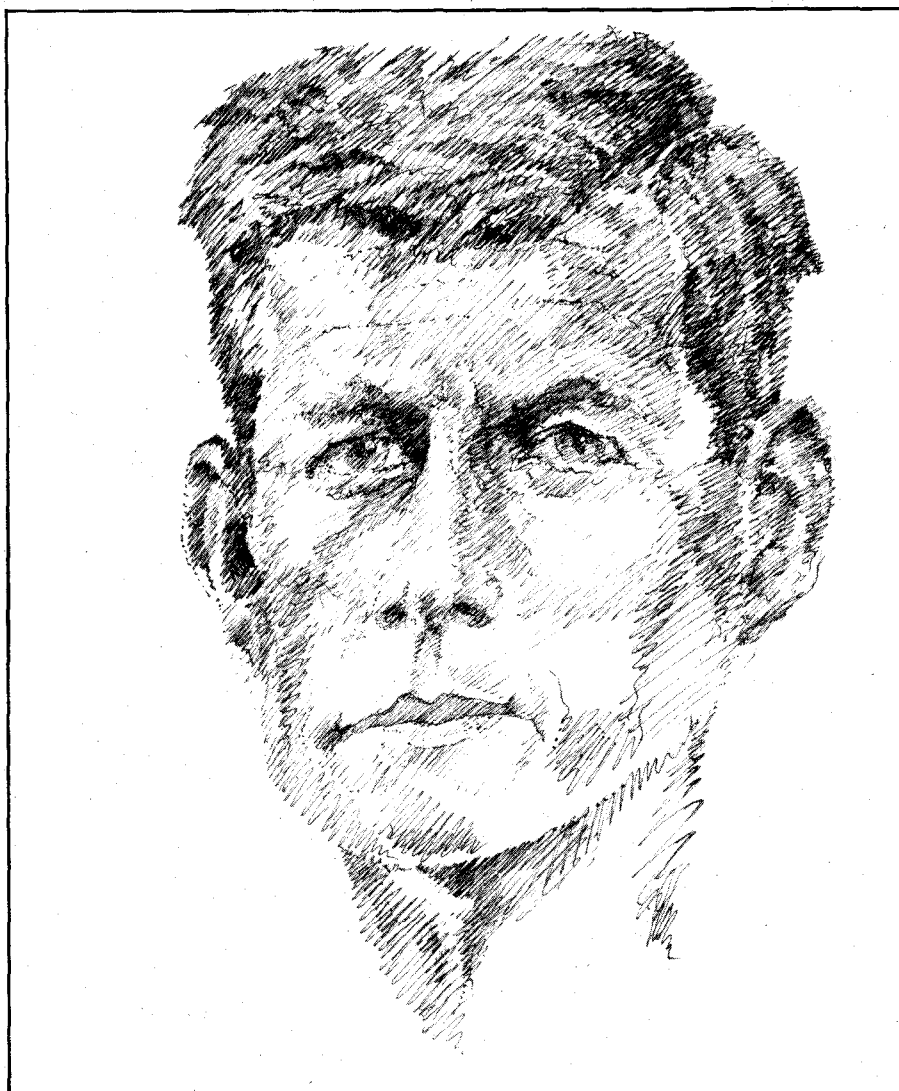
shrewd moves, including the inevitable buttering up of Johnson, but more in the interest of self-advancement than statesmanship. Hence the legend that Kennedys dutifully step into the fallen brother's shoes even when the shoes hadn't fit the fallen brother either.

Jack ends abruptly with the Democratic nomination sewn up for 1960. At that point Jack seemed, on paper (and this book provides all the paper you could want) the least promising of the boys, with the possible exception of the boisterous Joe. Although the story is not as one-sided as a short review may make it appear, it still leaves one feeling as Arthur Schlesinger's book on Bobby did, that one must simply take it on faith that a Kennedy will grow when he absolutely has to.

To which one can add only that although Parmet's book is highly illuminating and worth reading, written as such gallimaufries often seem to be by a bright fellow and a dull one taking turns, the gist of it was not unknown in 1960. The Kennedys were not that effectively duplicitous. Jack's absenteeism in Congress was duly noted, and his somewhat conservative record was there for liberals to see if they wanted, just as Congressman Anderson's is today. And Joe Kennedy was not *that* easy to hide. We also heard about the women, which never hurts the myth of leadership much, and about the Addison's disease, but not about the other health problems.

"I'm voting for him against my better judgment," I remember a liberal saying then, and that was precisely Jack's edge. Some startling force of intelligence (for a politician anyway), combined with the manifest willpower that got him off his back again and again, made him seem like the king of the litter (it's an Irish mistake to expect more than one) even before we'd met the litter. And after reading this scrupulously detailed book which surely tells us the worst (if we except anything written by Victor Lasky), I still feel the same way. "I never could have done it" said old Joe Kennedy, and he was right, because it wasn't a trick, and he couldn't do anything that wasn't a trick. That was his legacy, and Jack used it, of course, along with his family, his war record, and anything else he could lay hands on. But in this he resembled a hundred other scheming hacks, only more so, and very few of these fellows become president.

On November 22, 1963, Jack himself became the only trick a Kennedy needed. The mere invocation of his name or memory, even the sound of the strange



drawing of Jack Kennedy by David Schorr

family voice, did more than all Joe P's elephantine maneuverings put together. But if the order of birth had been reversed, I doubt if the other two could have done the same for Jack. He was in that sense the real founding father of the aborted Kennedy dynasty. Bobby and Teddy sprang partly armed from his brow. The rest is just another Irish

ballad: hope in the morning, disaster at night. This book reminds us, almost in spite of itself, that the hope was real.

Wilfrid Sheed

Wilfrid Sheed's collection of criticism, *The Good Word*, has recently been published by Viking-Penguin.

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party by Graham Greene

(Simon & Schuster; \$9.95)

You're about to learn why it's perhaps never a good idea to discuss Graham Greene with ex-Catholics like me. Their history of reading him is likely to be (a) anecdotal and (b) dialectical. Here is my own dialectical anecdote, by way of warning:

Graham Greene was, of course,

required reading for us at a Catholic boys' school 20 years ago, along with Joyce's "The Dead," Chesterton's essays, and Mauriac. I remember reading *The Power and the Glory* one afternoon in the library, seeing that parched Mexican town—Greene always has that screen-writer's way of making you see—when

Brother Something-or-other with a bald spot tapped me on the shoulder to offer an unsolicited opinion about Graham Greene: "He's a good writer, but I don't think he's a good Catholic." I had to ask why not. The answer is: "Because he *doesn't hate sin*." A fit riposte did not occur to me until recently, as I came to the astonishing end of Greene's new novel. "Maybe that's why he's such a good writer," I should have said to Brother Baldspot. I never think of these things in time.

Or maybe it's necessary to have read this latest (and 21st) novel, *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party*, to see, once and for all, the full strangeness of Greene on sin. Far from hating evil with that good clean hatred one feels it deserves, Graham Greene contrives to honor it by installing it at the center of every interesting question about human beings and their little lives. He can't endorse evil, and wouldn't if he could—that is, he can't say bad is good—but he gives it the place of honor at his table, literally, in *Doctor Fischer*: this despite Greene's keen social conscience, immense political awareness, and broad international experience in these frightful times of ours.

Doctor Fischer is filthy rich from some trivial invention years back, and now holds court at his house to a circle of also-but-not-quite-so-rich friends, or toadies, called Toads by his disdainful daughter in her imperfect English. The Doctor gives great and famous dinners, centering around an onerous game. The Toads—rich American widow, handsome/stupid film actor, international lawyer, phony general, etc.—must submit to being humiliated by Doctor Fischer, whose devices are cruel, elaborate, and whimsical. If they do submit, they are rewarded with substantial presents, like an 18-carat gold watch, a Mercedes Benz, or diamonds and emeralds. These are all presents the Toads could afford to give themselves, of course, but the greed of the rich, Fischer discovers again and again, is bottomless. So he is paying for the pleasure of seeing them debase themselves out of sheer greed; betting on their greed against their dignity. His own greed, he tells his son-in-law (the book's narrator), is not for money: it is a greed like God's, he says. He is greedy for the humiliation of mankind.

Now Fischer himself, in his glittering palace on the lake, with his lofty and

bitter metaphysics and epicurean, black-tie cruelty, is a lovely improbability; he is an artifice that, most of the way through this short book, makes no claim to resembling anything one could find in nature. He is posited for the sake of argument, and posited delightfully: this is decidedly one of those works Greene himself calls his "entertainments." His suavity and panache bring to mind George Orwell's remark about Greene: "He appears to share the idea, which has been floating around ever since Baudelaire, that there is something rather *distingué* in being damned; Hell is a sort of high-class night club. . . ." A useful insight, but Orwell was mistaken in seeing all of Graham Greene in that mauve light. He missed how Greene sets such evil in a context of human ordinariness and even tedium; how he examines Hell's night club, as it were, in glamorous daytime.

The structure of *Doctor Fischer* is a simple thing, and permits easy showing of what I mean. The novel is the story not only of Fischer but of his son-in-law Jones (as in "ordinariness"), whose unhappy life is nearly proof that God is indeed greedy for our humiliation. One night in World War II he lost both his parents and also his right hand; then his wife and baby died in childbirth, and he settled into the most empty and absurd and Kafkaesque of jobs, as a translator and letter-writer for a chocolate factory in Switzerland. The book opens with a sort of miracle: the miracle that Anna-Luise Fischer, young and pretty, warm-hearted and intelligent, should fall in love with Jones, more than 30 years older than she, unattractive, and beneath her in station:

We might have been a world and not a mere canton apart. I would begin work at 8:30 in the morning while she would be still asleep in her pink and white bedroom, which she told me was like a wedding cake, and when I would go out to eat a hasty sandwich for my lunch, she was probably sitting before her glass in a dressing gown doing her hair.

They fall in love quickly and permanently, live together, and soon marry, all without interference from Fischer, who hardly seems to know that he has a daughter. But Jones insists on Fischer taking some kind of notice of the wedding. All he gets for his pains is an invitation, for himself alone, to one of the remarkable dinners. Jones is not Toad material—because he's not rich enough, Fischer thinks at first, giving the impression that the mere Joneses of the world are not even worth the

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By Benjamin A. Rogge

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trouble to humiliate. But Fischer comes to respect Jones. When Jones shows disgust at the humiliation of the Toads, Fischer comes to feel that he must explain himself, which is the occasion for some of the cleverest, most Satanic repartee that Greene has ever written. Here's the doctor on his aforementioned hobbyhorse, God's degradation of the world:

'The world grows more and more miserable while he twists the endless screw, though he gives us presents—for a universal suicide would defeat his purpose—to alleviate the humiliations we suffer. A cancer of the rectum, a streaming cold, incontinence. For example you are a poor man, so he gives you a small present, my daughter, to keep you satisfied a little longer.'

'She's a very big alleviation,' [Jones] said. 'If it's God who gave her to me I'm grateful to him.'

'And yet perhaps Mrs. Montgomery's necklace [one of Fischer's presents] will last longer than your so-called love.'

'Why should he wish to humiliate us?'

'Don't I wish to humiliate? And they say he made us in his image. Perhaps he found he was rather a bad craftsman and he is disappointed in the result. One throws a faulty article in the dustbin. . . .'

The story of the novel, its graceful, disturbing thread of narrative, leads to two notable results. First, it confirms Fischer's sardonic hunch that God has given Anna Luise to Jones only to keep him on the string a little longer. She dies a death that is at once picturesque and revolting, and Jones is plunged deeper than ever into loneliness. Second, it reveals the hidden romantic history of Doctor Fischer himself: a wife, Anna-Luise's dead mother, who rebelled gently against his tyrannical ways. Now there will be readers who feel that the humanization of Doctor Fischer, by means of giving him familiar human causes for his evil, is a falling-off from the gorgeously fictive, allegorical plane on which the entertainment is set. Such a reaction fails, as Orwell's did, to see the radical bifurcation of the mundane and spiritual that makes for Greene's particular effects. Though he is a moralist, you don't get in Greene any unanchored evil or fleshless good: they are always limbs on a mordantly familiar human body (or corpse). This is why, in the end, he doesn't hate sin enough for Brother Somebody's taste: because it "smells of mortality," like Lear's hand.

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party (the bomb party is an allusion to the spectacular finish) is not one of Greene's most impressive books. It's too sketchy,

even for a novella, to support the weight of its own themes. Perhaps Greene is temporarily tired—his recent *The Human Factor* is arguably his masterpiece and must have been a mammoth undertaking. But though it is not Greene's very best, *Doctor Fischer* does reveal as clearly as any of his works the terribly consistent direction of his creativity. That direction is always toward a mapping of the places in the contemporary landscape where the idea of God (and Satan) *used* to be, the lacunae left by God's demise, and by the demise of faith in God. Secular readers are made to discover the sources of the religion they don't have, the exigent spirit that inhabits (or inhabited once) the temples

they don't go to. Greene shows the religious need as existing independent of the God who doesn't exist; he does this by staking out the point at which materialist accounts of ordinary experience fail. This is a project of almost unique importance among the work that novelists do these days—but you have to prepare yourself to have to do with a novelist who has something important to discuss with you, as well as a will to entertain.

John Romano

John Romano is a writer and critic who teaches English at Columbia University.

Off Center

by Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

(Dial; \$9.95)

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison was once expelled from an est session after 24 hours of training. It's significant that she was expelled for failing to close her eyes—for flatly refusing to lie on the floor with her eyes shut and give herself over to her fantasies. "I can't," she said, and out she went, stepping over writhing bodies all the way to the door.

In *Off Center*, a collection of 21 essays (some previously published in this magazine), she directs her level gaze toward such diverse subjects as Roseland, Billy Graham, the Godfather movies, and her own hypochondria. She is funny, intelligent, refreshingly candid, and very nearly impossible to fool—a woman with her eyes open, every minute. On the feminist politics in Adrienne Rich's *Lies, Secrets and Silence*: "My reading of Ms. Rich's book does not even tell me whether I may assume there are any qualitative differences between my son—poised on the brink of adulthood, scared, brave, kind, uncertain—and Idi Amin." On Werner Erhard: "a forty-one-year-old Gucci-Pucci-Bally California-style guru who 'got it' while driving along the California freeway, and promptly packaged 'it,' and is, as a consequence, awfully rich." And on children: "Even to watch television with a child who is not yet jaded is to convince one that, while pessimism of the intellect may be here to stay,

optimism of the spirit is still—gloriously—possible."

She has a particular gift for recognizing and admitting the ambiguities of normal life—surely not easy, when you're writing essays. How tempting it must be to declare one's subject all black, or all white! But no, here she is on abortion: "Is it really so awful to admit to confusion and unhappiness over the issue of abortion? . . . The most painful moral struggles are not those between the good and the evil, but between the good and the lesser good."

In "The Helanders and the Moonies: A Family Story," she interviews a young girl who joined the Moonies and was twice kidnapped (or "rescued," depending on your viewpoint) by her family and twice deprogrammed, only to rejoin the Moonies both times. She talks with the daughter at the Unification Church's World Mission Center; then she visits the parents in their cluttered, comfortable house. ("What did she have for lunch?" the mother asks, heartbreakingly. "Did she talk about us?") There are no slick conclusions in this article; the writer sides neither with the parents nor with the daughter. Or rather, she sides with both, understanding the daughter's outrage as well as the parents' pain. "I am entirely convinced," she says, "of the passionate sincerity of Carolyn and Elton Helander, and of

their devotion to their daughter, and of the selflessness of their attempts to rescue her. But they did not entirely persuade me of the appropriateness of deprogramming . . . nor did they entirely succeed in convincing me that all of Wendy's charges were inaccurate."

Here, as in most of the other essays, the reader has a sense of parting the jungle fronds alongside the writer, breaking a new path through the underbrush, hoping to come to some understanding. It's reassuring: we trust her good intentions. Watch her, for instance, interviewing Jane Fonda, alter-



photo of Barbara Harrison by Sigrid Estrada

nately experiencing open admiration and edgy dislike. "There is both more and less to her than meets the eye," she decides—not giving up, really, but sharing with us her honest bewilderment, leading us moment by moment through the hot and cold of a day with Jane Fonda.

There were times in *Off Center* when I wanted to say "Yes!" out loud—to her thoughts on the value of work, for instance, or to her feelings about her child (in an essay whose title is a little essay all by itself: "Write the Truth, My Son Said. Write About Me.'). There were other times when I vehemently disagreed; her step-by-step style of exploration allows us that. I can't, for example, share her pleasure in Dick Cavett's skittery chatter, and I find it hard to believe that J. D. Salinger's plots rely upon adoring, innocent young women as foils. And if Jane Fonda speaks "flatly, and without emotion" of her mother's suicide, why should that necessarily mean that she's "sanitized" her tragedy? More likely, she's just tired of journalists asking her to spill her private sorrows.

My most serious disagreement was with "Joan Didion: Only Disconnect," which first appeared in the *Nation* as "The Courage of Her Afflictions." The problem is not that the piece is negative (although I do admire Joan Didion's non-fiction), but that it's an all-out *attack*. In a business such as reviewing, where the writer/reviewer teeters eternally on the brink of conflict-of-interest, it might be best to decline comment on a fellow-writer one so passionately disapproves of. What's especially ironic is Barbara Harrison's central criticism: that Joan Didion spotlights her own sensibility in describing any event. It's true, of course, but that's what lends a Didion essay its distinctive color. You may find her sensibility amusing or irritating; either way, it sets her work aside from the average newspaper article—just as (and here's the real irony) Barbara Harrison's sensibility sets *her* work aside.

Granted, the Harrison sensibility is more . . . well, sensible; but it's equally a defining element, a unique sort of lens upon the world. Look at the way she catches the hairline shifts of mood that give an interview its tension—the fact, for instance, that the Moonie disciple is working hard to please her, and also perhaps to manipulate her; or that Jane Fonda grows chillier after a Fonda child misbehaves in Barbara Harrison's presence. And what would the following description of her est experience amount to, without her special combination of humor, perception, and kitchen-sink matter-of-factness?

During the process, I play these (un-

authorized) games: I imagine a passage of Job written in est-eze (item: despair) and I understand that the reduction of all human emotions to single-word 'items' makes art—and emotion itself—impossible. . . . I think of people I would like to have sitting around me: novelist Muriel Spark, for her iconoclastic intelligence, her irony, her absolute faith in an absolute God; Ralph Nader and a whole bunch of his Raiders; my Marxist friend Sol Yurick (part of what is going on in this room is a denial of cause and effect, which is a denial of history); a Jesuit; Woody Allen; and anybody at all who will make a convincing case for human reciprocity—who will convince people that people do hurt one another, help one another, drive one another crazy, and make one another happy. . . . I try to imagine what would happen if anyone introduced the following things into this room: somebody with a gun. A Beethoven quartet. Somebody having a coronary. A crying baby. (Reality, I think, would rip their game wide open.)

In a culture where closing your eyes is considered a step toward discovery, where women proudly report their assertiveness in saying "no" to a sick neighbor, and where students endangered by a race riot call Channel 5 TV before they call the police, there's an urgent need for Barbara Grizzuti Harrison's sharp, unblinking vision. We are lucky to have her.

Anne Tyler

Anne Tyler's most recent novel is *Morgan's Passing* (Knopf).

Fire Watch by Alan Dennis Burke (Little, Brown; \$11.95)

Judge W. Arthur Garrity is a lonely man these days. The Federal District judge who ordered Boston's schools desegregated six years ago and who has kept continuing jurisdiction over the case has recently seen some of his oldest and best friends desert him. First, the black plaintiffs, who have rarely differed with him, challenged his plan for closing 13 city schools to achieve further racial balance. Then the First Circuit Court of Appeals, which has seldom reversed him, issued a stay of his school closing

order. And the *Boston Globe*, long his most fervent backer, has been hinting he should get out of the case.

Even the world of Camelot, from which Garrity came, has begun to sour on him. Mary McGrory, the syndicated columnist who is a mainstay of Kennedy liberalism, stoutly backed Garrity for years against those who denounced him as a "dictator" and a "Nazi." But last fall, when she came to town for the dedication of the Kennedy Library, a new tone was evident in McGrory's com-

mentary. "Many Bostonians now wish that Garrity had found another way to pursue the goal of integration," she wrote. "The brunt of the social experiment is being borne by the poor of both races. The benefit to black students from Roxbury ghettos who are transported to the hostile neighborhoods and indifferent schools of South Boston and Charlestown is not immediately apparent."

Indeed, there is a growing perception that the desegregation of Boston's schools has been largely self-defeating. Thousands of white students—just how many is a matter of dispute—have deserted the city's schools since 1974, transforming the overwhelmingly white system into one that is now predominantly "minority." The students who remain—both white and black—are generally those with no other recourse. Not surprisingly, with so many ill-prepared, ill-motivated, sullen, and resentful students, anything approaching genuine education has proved difficult. And though the level of violence in most schools has diminished, the racial mayhem outside—clearly exacerbated by busing tensions—continues unabated. Only this spring, a black worker was stabbed to death on the streets of white Charlestown.

Alan Dennis Burke's first novel, *Fire Watch*, is a dispatch from this battle zone. Burke knows whereof he speaks. Like his protagonist, Peter Lyons, Burke was security chief at one of the city's most troubled high schools, clearly the model for his novel's John Quincy Adams High. His tale is built on Lyons's vain struggle to keep some semblance of order at Adams, while trying to make his way in a city turned savage and treacherous by a desegregation order.

The city is never identified, but the book is filled with unmistakable references to Boston. The school committeeman who takes joy in baiting the press is clearly patterned on Boston's John Kerrigan, who delighted in calling reporters "maggots." The black man attacked with an American flag on a city street is Ted Landsmark, a Boston lawyer whose beating in April 1976 attracted front page attention across the country. *Fire Watch* is less a conventional novel than a documentary, a piece of angry journalism disguised as fiction.

Burke's view of contemporary Boston is unremittingly bleak. It is a landscape familiar to many readers of George Higgins, the better-known chronicler of the city's seamy side: a dismal world of stale taverns, bottle-strewn streets,

crumbling three-deckers, dying neighborhoods. It is peopled by an unsavory cast of characters: venal politicians, crooked real-estate men, slothful teachers, malicious children. And John Quincy Adams High is an outright disaster, a grim parody of an educational institution.

There is a joke making the rounds in Boston these days. "If you put a dumb white kid next to a dumb black kid, what have you got?" The answer, of course, is "Two dumb kids." That is clearly Burke's view of Boston education today.

"Don't any of the blacks come to school to learn?" someone asks Lyons. "Oh yeah," he replies.

"They all come to learn. They tell you they want a good education. And then they sleep in class, play cards. They think they get an education just being there. Like it happens by osmosis or something. Instead of work. Some of them . . . they're not bad kids. You feel sorry for them sometimes. But they won't work. I don't think they know how."

"What about the whites?" asks his friend.

"To be honest, they're no bargain either. They're all pretty stupid when you get right down to it."

The teachers and the principals aren't much better.

"Whenever a teacher adds up the kids in his class he counts some people who haven't shown their faces in months," Lyons explains.

"He counts them because if he goes to the attendance office and says, Johnny Jones is no longer in my class, a replacement's found to fill Johnny's seat. Teachers like small, manageable classes and they don't want new kids."

"But can't the attendance people check the records themselves?"

"The more kids in the school, the more jobs, the more money for everybody. . . ."

Lyons himself is no winner. He slips money to a school committeeman in hopes of buying a better job at the high school, cheats on his wife with an art teacher, and burns down an apartment building he owns in a changing neighborhood in order to collect the insurance.

But of all the book's characters, the one who comes off worst is the judge, the man responsible for all this. He never appears on stage, but others label him a tyrant, a meddler, a fussy budget, a fool. Like the city, the judge is never identified. But he is plainly W. Arthur Garrity Jr.

There is much to admire in this novel. It is well paced, artfully constructed, often arresting. Burke has a keen ear for

Arab and Jew



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dialogue; he knows how city people express their anger, their frustration, the bile that keeps welling up in their mouths. He skillfully evokes the feel of a Boston high school during this period. (I was frequently an observer at Charlestown High School in 1976-77 and much of what I saw then was not far from the picture Burke gives us.) Nor do I dispute the air of futility that pervades the book. Desegregation in Boston has fallen increasingly on the shoulders of those least able to cope with it, and it should surprise no one that they have failed to make it work.

But the implication that this is principally the fault of a rigid, bumbling, meddlesome judge is profoundly simplistic.

Burke has written a book that is utterly innocent of history. There is nothing here that gives any perspective on how all this came to pass, of the Boston School Committee's decade-long obstruction of more modest efforts to desegregate the schools, of the NAACP's decision to file a lawsuit in Federal District Court, of the painful evolution in the Supreme Court's attitude toward northern school segregation, and of Arthur Garrity's conscientious application of that law to Boston.

Burke, to be sure, hasn't set out to write a history of Boston's school wars. He claims to be writing a novel, which gives him artistic license. But documentary novels ought to be held to some elemental standard of fairness. If he is going to lace his book with damaging evidence against Garrity and his order—only lightly veiled by fictional techniques—shouldn't he at least summarize the rest of the story? The judge has enough troubles these days without having to face this sort of impressionistic indictment.

I don't mean to suggest that Garrity be held blameless for what has happened to Boston during the past six years. His orders at times have betrayed a miscalculation of the deeply-rooted divisions in the city and a lack of sensitivity to Boston's ethnic and political realities.

But what has happened in Boston far transcends the errors of a particular judge. It is a conflict as old as the nation itself—between the notion of community invoked by John Winthrop when he set out to found a "city upon a hill" in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the idea of equality enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. The same conflict can be traced through the Lincoln-Douglas debates in which Lincoln argued that the essence of democratic government was

"the equality of all men" derived from natural law, while Douglas held that it was the "principle of popular sovereignty," the right of American communities to decide fundamental issues, like slavery, for themselves.

In the flowering of 1960s idealism, Americans persuaded themselves that community and equality were not only compatible, but mutually reinforcing principles. In the single year of 1964—as Diane Ravitch has pointed out—the Johnson administration secured passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Economic Opportunity Act, the first committing the executive branch to an unprecedented role in the struggle for racial equality; the second, with its guarantee of "maximum feasible participation," granting an unprecedented chance for poor people to control their own communities. Impelled by the same benevolent impulses, passed by the same congressional coalition, they were twin expressions of the nation's conscience at mid-decade.

But soon the inherent tensions between community and equality reasserted themselves. Civil rights legislation sought to override local law or custom—often equated with bigotry—in the name of a national commitment to human rights. The poverty program, on the other hand, encouraged "communi-

ty control" as an antidote to bureaucratic centralization.

In Boston and elsewhere during the 1970s, we found to our chagrin that we couldn't have it both ways. We learned that we had to make some hard choices—between racial justice and self-determination, between equality of educational opportunity and neighborhood schools, between a black child's right to a desegregated education and a white mother's right to control her own child's destiny.

What makes Boston's experience over the past six years rise to the level of genuine tragedy is precisely that these are not choices between right and wrong, or between judicial dictatorship and sound social policy, but between competing values, between right and right.

And what keeps Alan Burke's promising first novel from becoming a first-rate book is his failure to grasp that desperate dilemma.

J. Anthony Lukas

J. Anthony Lukas, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, is writing a book about the lives of three Boston families in the decade following Martin Luther King's death.

Falling in Place by Ann Beattie

(Random House; \$10.95)

In the two novels and many stories she has produced since she began to publish in the early 1970s, Ann Beattie has written almost exclusively of the now not so young men and women who came of age in the 1960s, a time that bears a prelapsarian glow to her characters as they look back at it from the no-man's-land of subsidized passivity into which so many of them seem to drift after leaving the trenches of graduate school. Not surprisingly, and not without justice, Ann Beattie has been praised on sociological grounds as the chronicler of this generation. She has indeed been given the kind of critical attention usually reserved for our handful of art novelists, and this both because of her subject matter and because of her technique. Ann Beattie disdains the

bogus dynamism of plot for a more oblique and lifelike mode of development which eschews intensifications, strong ironies, and climaxes. In literary commentary there is a prejudice against the well-paced and plotted story, and in the making of the reputation of a writer like Ann Beattie the part this plays should not be underestimated.

My own view is that Ann Beattie's sociological realism is superficial, a reflective realism of accurate detail—what songs are in, what clothes, what expressions—rather than the kind of critical realism whose exemplar is *Buddenbrooks*. As for her artistry, I think she has yet to adapt her laid-back sensibility to the large-scale dynamics of the novel. Her short stories seem immediately accomplished, whereas in

Chilly Scenes of Winter and now in *Falling in Place* one misses that irresistible momentum of conclusion one always feels in a first-rate novel. She drifts and pads just when we want her to get on with it. She can't seem to rein in her characters, either; and she rivals them in her tolerance for gabby potheads who fill her books with clouds of sophomoric banter.

The recipient of a graduate school education in English, Ann Beattie no doubt has had it drummed into her that narrative mastery is a species of imperialism that went out with the high tide of capitalism, the death of God, the end of patriarchy, or something equally nasty and portentous. Since we are no longer in control of our lives, this view holds, the novelist ought not to play God in controlling the destinies of her characters. (In fact, one of Ann Beattie's stories contains a parable about a god-like narrator of childhood stories, and he, tellingly, is killed in Vietnam.) Drift in a novel is not therefore what we have always thought it, an artistic weakness, but a profound comment on the way we live now. We drift, characters in the novels that represent us drift, all God's former children drift.

Ann Beattie buries her stories under heaps of detail. When one of her characters enters a room you know you're going to get an inventory of everything that character sees. Has Ann Beattie ever considered the effect of this? Along with her characters, she seems to be stalling, marking time, trying to figure out what to do next. One never feels this with an accomplished novelist, and even a hack would know that he has to keep things moving along. But Ann Beattie is a writer of sensibility, and the point of all her details is to give that faculty a workout, and never mind that this makes her readers impatient with her fine local effects, and her novels draggy and slack.

In fact, the first half of *Falling in Place* isn't slack at all. Ann Beattie has a reputation as a rapid producer, so one is not surprised that the time of the novel is last summer. The surprise is her milieu, for, as *Publishers Weekly* rightly says, we are in "Cheever country," that green reach of western Connecticut whose spiritual condition is marvelously evoked by one of Beattie's characters when she says: "It's so beautiful here, and we don't notice it very much, and when we do, it doesn't seem to help." All those lawns, all that unhappiness.

Cheever country it certainly is, and if I

may be permitted an allusion; I would say that it is Heller country also—the suburban Heller of the underrated *Something Happened*. The cast of characters is the same in both novels—a sexually restive husband, a martyr wife, an unhappy little boy, a bitchy teenage girl. So is the theme implied by this paradigmatic assemblage—that the American Dream is a cheat. That both fictional fathers are advertising men is not Beattie's homage to Heller but an inevitability for any writer who takes up the theme of shadows over suburbia. Advertising, after all, has become an almost wholly metaphoric profession. In making a character an advertising man, a novelist shucks the burden of describing his workaday life: we already know what he does, and we don't like it. It's a relief to know that Beattie is not above exploiting a cliché, for its economies.

Beattie's ad man is John Knapp. At the good Cheever age of 40, he has drifted into an affair with Nina, a woman so young that she refers to his wife, Louise, as "old." Nina, a graduate of Bard, is a more familiar Beattie type. She has a small apartment on the West Side, with whose every roach Beattie makes us familiar, a job at Lord and Taylor, claims she is more "together" than John, and possesses a platoon of drop-out friends who drop in inconveniently and always with the exasperating nonchalance of the wholly self-absorbed. There is very little in the way of plot. Instead, to move things along Beattie shifts rapidly from New York to Connecticut, from Nina to John to Louise, and also to John's children, John Joel and Mary. Mary's summer school teacher, Cynthia, also has a place on this crowded canvas, as does her circle of friends and tag-alongs, who, in one of the interesting loopings in the novel, link her to Nina.

This brisk cutting from character to character is combined, at first effectively, with brief italicized codas to the main chapters containing the intense ruminations of several of the characters. The shifts in mood and point of view thus produced, plus our roused expectations over whether John, who has already taken to living with his mother in Rye, will finally leave his wife for Nina, create a sense of movement that sweeps us along for a while. The narrative method is similar to that in such Altman films as *A Wedding* or *Nashville*, where rapid cutting from character to character takes the place of a forward flowing narrative centered on a single character. But this method works better in a film, which swims past

us in an hour or two, than it does in a novel, where we need the tug of a strong narrative line to make us turn the pages. Heller, to return to him for a moment, was attacked for writing a big novel without a strong narrative line; nothing happened, the critics carped. But Heller's prose is so charged with feeling that he can compel us by the power of his voice alone. By contrast, Ann Beattie's prose voice is flat, even, uninflected. It is an admirable instrument for conveying the laid-back styles of her characters, but there is no agony in it, as there is in Heller's voice. And agony compels.

Something finally happens in *Falling in Place*, and in yet another parallel to Heller's novel, it involves the ad-man's son. John Joel, a fat 10-year-old with an empty summer stretching before him, is the most affecting character Beattie has drawn. His father has inexplicably moved out of the house, his mother seems to care more for the memory of her dead dog than she does for him, his nemesis, his sister, taunts him for his weight, and his only friend is a chubby little monster named Parker. He is a superb and memorable invention, full of the rage that Beattie's post-1960s characters lack. Parker pricks holes in his mother's diaphragm, and what he

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does to John Joel is equally shocking. If only the novel ended 20 pages after this event! But no, it drifts on and on, out of gas, for another 100 pages. In *Falling in Place* Ann Beatty's editors have let her talent down.

Jack Beatty

Mysteries

There are not nearly so many new mysteries around these days as there used to be, and one wonders why. I am inclined toward two explanations:

My first thesis is that writers heretofore happily giving us mysteries are now turning to "serious fiction." Half the mystery novels published today are labeled "a novel" on the dust jacket, which is fair enough, and now some of the best writers are turning away from crime and detection as such, even if a crime and a sense of the unexplained remain central to their work (as to Dostoevsky, Faulkner, Hawthorne, and Melville), to explore human nature outside the formulaic limitations imposed by novels of detection. Two such are P. D. James and Bartholomew Gill.

Phyllis James has long since been crowned the queen of crime, the successor to Sayers and Christie; now she steps into territory occupied by Truman Capote, Shelby Foote, Carson McCullers, even Henry James. *Innocent Blood* (Scribner's; \$10.95) tells of a young woman, now 18 and under English law entitled to go beyond her adoptive parents to learn about her real mother and father, who slowly, intensely, finds that all present evidence utterly contradicts what she had formerly believed to be true about herself. All of P. D. James's novels operate at two levels, and this is no exception, for throughout one is being asked to contemplate the weight to be given to heredity and to environment in shaping character. Happily, she is a far more sensitive analyst than the Shockley brigade.

Correction:

Two typographical errors were introduced in a sentence in the second item of last week's Cambridge Diarist. The sentence should have read: "In its first and only appearance, the *gauleiter* enters history in a Nazi party uniform, functioning as ideological police chief of Germany's *gaus*, or provinces."

Gill has written a series of books about McGarr of the Irish Garda, the most recent centering on the Dublin Horse Show (Scribner's), but now he too has turned to a novel and, as Mark McGarrity, in *A Passing Advantage* (Rawson, Wade; \$10.95), has written an effective statement in dramatic form about military power, in which both the Soviet and the American military commanders who face each other across the Elbe enter into a series of delicately calibrated judgments based on mistaken assumptions. I had liked McGarr, but I suspect we will see more of McGarrity in the future, and once again the detective novel will appear to be "in decline."

My other thesis turns on the evident fact that many publishers are bringing out classic and near-classic detective fiction in paperback reprints in ever larger numbers, satisfying the demand by introducing new generations to the pleasures of Cyril Hare, Michael Gilbert, and Nicholas Blake (who was, of course, the poet Cecil Day-Lewis). The leader, at least in good taste, has been Harper & Row in its Perennial Library, all at \$1.95, which is a bargain in paper these days, and it is an enormous pleasure to find these worthies back among us. I've long had Gilbert's *The Danger Within* on my private list of the 200 best, for it is virtually unique in using a German prison camp as the scene of its crimes, and now the Perennial line is branching out further and more adventurously, into Kenneth Fearing and (most delightful of all) James Hilton, who didn't write solely about Mr. Chips or Shangri-la. Penguin, of course, goes right on doing its usual fine job, though it has to share Julian Symons with Perennial, and now Vintage books have entered the arena with a trio of Nicolas Freeling's Henri Castang series, of which *What are the Bugles Blowing For?* (reduced by Viking to *The Bugles Blowing* for reasons unknown) is especially compelling and morally unnerving. Even the University of Chicago Press is, happily, in the act, with two of the very best of the Judge Dee pastiches from seventh-century imperial China, as written by Robert van Gulik, *The Chinese Bell Murders* and *The Chinese Nail Murders*, with an entertaining and informative introduction by Donald Lach (though, I fear, precisely the same introduction is used for both). As Lach, a historian who specializes in Western perceptions of Eastern cultures, has noted, the early Judge Dee stories, written between 1950 and 1958 to actual stock situations arising from traditional Chinese law, were much the most

authentic. Even so I perversely prefer the three books van Gulik had published in Kuala Lumpur in 1961-62, during his period as Dutch ambassador to Malaya, which I had the good fortune to discover there, *The Haunted Monastery*, *The Red Pavilion*, and *The Lacquer Screen*. These were beginning to show evidence of van Gulik's other scholarly interest, definitions of pornography in Chinese traditional society. And now Scribner's has reprinted some of the others.

Of course, reprints of Christie, Rex Stout, Ngaio Marsh, and Hammond Innes always will be with us, and so they should, but it is good news that so much long missed is being brought back into print.

Robin Winks

Brief Reviews

Drylongso:
A Self-Portrait of
Black Americans
by John Langston Gwaltney
(Random House; \$12.95)

Inside *Drylongso*, which purports to be majestic oral history in the tradition of *Working* or *All God's Dangers*, there is an eloquent book trying to get out. Black people too ordinary to make headlines or get into trouble, people of stable jobs and stable families ("drylongso" means "ordinary" in black parlance) have poured out their souls to black anthropologist John Langston Gwaltney. And they say a great deal that is worth hearing, mostly about the troubles they've seen: racial discrimination at the hands of employers, landlords, cops, welfare workers; daily assaults on their dignity; slights from well-meaning whites; economic hard times; rape, even murder. Almost to a man, whether college-educated teacher or street-corner wino, they are understandably bitter toward white people, and their rage is no less fierce now than it was in the heat of the 1960s urban uprisings. In the restrained expression of Hannah Nelson, a 61-year-old domestic, "I am tired of being governed by people who are not as considerate or intelligent as I am."

What prevents this earnest book from being a good one is Gwaltney's refusal to impose professional judgment on what his interview subjects tell him. Despite

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the book's title, Gwaltney will not let them be ordinary. He introduces each as a paragon of folk wisdom, as if suffering and survival have made their every utterance a gem of truth. He records silly comments as well as penetrating ones, giving equal weight to both. The interviews run on too long; clarity and focus are lost in a blizzard of words.

Perhaps the purpose of oral documentation of this sort is purely to record the beliefs of a people, truthful or otherwise. But their credibility is undermined by Gwaltney's florid introductions, which puff up the interviewees (and read like unintended parody of James Baldwin): "Janice Saunders' salubrious awareness of the formidable element of deadly fatuousness in the black nationalist renaissance of her time does not dispose her to nihilism or perennial dolor."

"Core black culture," Gwaltney writes in the book's introduction, "has traditionally esteemed good talk and profound dialogue." But he notes that this oral tradition varies from dignified speech-making and serious disputation to "nonveracious forms such as woofing and sounding," which are playful or mildly menacing forms of boasting, exaggeration, and disparagement. What kind of veracity, after all, should we ascribe to the outlandish notions found on page after page of *Drylongso*? Whites, it is said, "don't know how they feel about anything until they consult their leaders or a book"; "During all our history here we have been right and they have been wrong and the only man who can not see that is a fool or a liar"; all white children are spoiled; their minds are warped by seeing their parents in the nude; whites "teach their children to urinate in the same glass they drink out of." And so on.

Gwaltney is trying to educate an America that still prefers to deny the reality of black culture and black rage. But his unwillingness to edit his material makes it harder to accept the unwelcome truths that his book undeniably contains.

Dan Cryer

Dan Cryer is book critic at *Newsday*.

Coming:
Christopher Lasch on
the Asylum.

The Dragon's Village by Yuan-tsung Chen

(Pantheon; \$10)

Thanks to a small but growing number of Chinese writers, one-time residents of the "motherland," Americans are at last beginning to learn what life was really like under the Maoist dispensation. Yuan-tsung Chen's thinly-veiled autobiographical novel, *The Dragon's Village*, is a particularly welcome addition to this émigré literature since it deals with a subject of compelling interest in 20th-century Chinese history, namely, land reform in China's populous and impoverished countryside.

The niece of a wealthy urban couple who prepare to flee to Hong Kong after the communist takeover in 1949, Chen's heroine Guan Ling-ling, shocks her family by electing to remain behind "temporarily" in Shanghai. Drawn into the Chinese revolution, she volunteers to participate in the new government's land-to-the-tiller campaign and is sent to backward Longxiang ("Dragon's Village") in remote Gansu province. Nothing in her education at St. Ursula's nor in her pampered and sheltered city life has prepared her for the wretched rural universe into which, with blithe ignorance, she now steps. Indeed, she can barely grasp the nature of the lives she has come to transform.

The strength of *The Dragon's Village* lies in the tension between Ling-ling's eagerness to carry out the party's agrarian program and her simultaneous revulsion from the harshness of its policies, between her sympathy for the plight of malnourished peasants and simultaneous abhorrence of their callous and violent lives. In this respect, Chen's novel is to be preferred over William Hinton's classic documentary of revolution in another Chinese village at approximately the same time (*Fanshen*), for Chen evinces an appreciation of the sociological complexity of village relations which Hinton, as an apologist for the Chinese Communist party, totally lacks. Although she has ostensibly embraced the party's world outlook and accepted its diagnosis of the rural problem, the autobiographical heroine invariably feels "a sharp twinge of conscience" after each raid on the home of a so-called feudal landlord. From the vantage point of her own upper-class background, Ling-ling is able to see these alleged "money bags" for what they really are: miserable souls whose

lives are nearly as bleak as those they supposedly exploit in a godforsaken corner of the Northwest.

Joey Bonner

Joey Bonner teaches Chinese history at Harvard University.

Home Before Night by Hugh Leonard

(Atheneum; \$9.95)

Until well into his 20s Jack Keyes (a.k.a. Hugh Leonard) knew only one world—an Ireland frozen in the past. In *Home Before Night* Leonard reconstructs that isolated world, looking with a gently mocking eye on his village of crumbling cottages and crusty folk.

At the center of this memoir is Hugh Leonard's da (the Gaelic word for dad), a Dickensian common man with energetic will to accept "his place." But it is Leonard's mother whose iron rule holds the family together, and as his memory unravels we gradually begin to understand her laments about her hard existence, which are always punctuated by moments of delightfully eccentric humanity.

Jack himself leads an average life, in spite of the intelligence that lifts him out of the "harbour" in which his adoptive parents have sheltered him. His world is one of fantasy—fed by the country's favorite pastime, the movies—and of adolescent nightmare. Leonard's memories are vivid, and his ability to capture a moment, a scene, is faultless. On the day that his retarded Aunt Mary goes off on her own to a town fair, his immense grandmother collapses "like a capsized alp." His Uncle Sonny, a shiftless do-nothing, swears that he will "swing for the man who had tampered with his sister," and young Jack "is not sure what tampering involves, unless Mary, like the mechanical man in the *Invisible Ray* . . . was unsuspectingly equipped with controls which someone had interfered with."

That some of the scenes are, perhaps unavoidably, too similar to scenes in Leonard's *Da*, which won several major drama awards when it was staged on Broadway in 1978, detracts from the rhythm of the narrative. We don't really want to hear again about the miserly pension and worthless eyeglass sculpture given to Jack's da for years of

devoted service as a gardener to "the Quality." But a three-character play by nature lacks the richer texture of the memoir and these rough spots melt away in the larger view of Ireland and of a boy's slow and often painful discovery that his life is in the end a journey home.

Susan von Hoffmann

Susan von Hoffmann is an editor at Saturday Review.

Paperbacks

Recapitulation
by Wallace Stegner
(Fawcett Crest; \$2.50)

Fifty years after leaving Salt Lake City for law school and a stunning diplomatic career in the East, Bruce Mason returns home to bury his aunt and is inundated by the past he thought he'd left behind long ago. In a half-dozen scenes, Wallace Stegner evokes Mason's memories of his mother, father, best friend, first girl which bring with them "the fragrance of lost possibility." Our reviewer Jack Beatty called Stegner's *Recapitulation* "moving in the full old-fashioned way, with the gloves of irony off, the games of language suspended . . . an exploration of the feelings evoked by 'home,' that heartbreaking word."

**The Habit of Being
Letters of Flannery
O'Connor**
selected and edited
by Sally Fitzgerald
(Vintage; \$6.95)

Sally Fitzgerald, a friend of Flannery O'Connor's, has gathered the massive correspondence of the writer who, stricken with lupus at 25, kept in touch with her friends mostly through letters mailed from her mother's farm in Milledgeville, Georgia. Fitzgerald offers a brief introduction and short commentaries that affectionately tell the facts of Flannery's life and lets O'Connor tell the rest. In her review Josephine Hendin wrote: "I am grateful to Sally Fitzgerald for bringing her back to speak to us

again, as she spoke to her friends—as the Georgia hick, the witty writer, the Catholic, the southern lady—the woman of discipline whose many selves added up to genius."

Ultra Goes to War
by Ronald Lewin
(Pocket Books; \$2.95)

Ronald Lewin tells the story of the 10,000 British codebreakers and assistants—chess grandmasters, renowned mathematicians, novelists, poets, classicists, physicists, publishers, editors, soldiers—who worked during World War II solving cryptograms in Germany's top ciphers, interpreting the results, and then sending them out in hundreds of messages every day to Churchill, to the chiefs of staff, and to the commanders in the field. This group of brilliant decoders, named "Ultra" because of its extremely secret work, intercepted orders from Hitler and reports to him, which gave the Allied commanders the information they needed to guide them to numerous victories. *Ultra Goes to War*, our reviewer David Kahn wrote, "will long remain fundamental in the historiography of intelligence and of World War II."

Facts of Life
by Maureen Howard
(Penguin Books; \$2.95)

This memoir of the accomplished novelist's Catholic upbringing in Bridgeport, Connecticut, her early married life at Williams College, and her venture into the publishing world, is told with the same ironic intelligence, wit, and narrative power that have characterized her three novels. "A painfully strong, good book," wrote Alfred Kazin, *Facts of Life* won the 1978 National Book Critics Circle Award.

Correspondence, from page 5

thought the date November 22, 1963, was permanently etched in the minds of the majority of Americans and especially those who profess political punditry such as those who write for your distinguished publication. How the late

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president could have made a tax cut in 1964 after being assassinated in 1963 is beyond me. I too doubt the practicality of such a proposal as being feasible considering our present economic situation. My only point is that before you choose to criticize an individual because he has misquoted a figure or statistic, get your facts straight as well.

Mario A. Mudano
St. Louis, Missouri

Human dumping ground

To the editors:

Your issue of May 24 carried two of the most significant and ominous articles I have read in a long time, ominous for the future of the United States as a democracy. I refer to "How to Bury Liberals" by Jonathan Tumin and "The Hunt Silver Caper" by William J. Quirk. What a great service you have performed in publishing these two articles!

On the matter of the Cuban refugees, however, I must agree with my old stand-by in matters of principle and policy: TRB. By all means let us admit those who qualify for harmonious citizenship. But in these explosive times, can we afford to let the United States become a dumping ground for criminals and defectives any more than we can continue to allow our soil to be a depository for poisonous chemicals?

David L. Graham
Freeport, Maine

Nominations

To the editors:

I certainly appreciate your appreciation of my National Commission for Everything recommendations (Washington Diarist, *TNR*, May 3). Naturally I am sorry that I did not win—being disqualified because of having included a dead man on my list. In truth I did not know that Al Capp was dead, which ought to indicate what a fine choice he was/would have been.

I do have two comments. First, I believe that my wife's nomination of Gregory Peck is far superior to the nomination of Charleton Heston. Peck is considerably duller and surely more involved in the public eye. He is always around supporting fine things and entreating us to do likewise. He is almost totally devoid of personality.

Second, I seriously question your acceptance of fictional characters (Kermit the Frog) if you would not accept

dead ones. I really don't see the difference. Neither could actually be available not to attend the many meetings that would be scheduled and never held. I assumed that you required living human beings, however inert.

Had I known fictional characters were acceptable I certainly would have given very serious consideration to Jonathan Livingston Seagull. He could well be the chairman of the committee. Wasn't it he

who first said, "I have a dream"? And he is more appropriate for your committee than is Kermit; lofty, spiritual, eminent, colorless—sort of a Jerry Brown with wings.

Anyway, you have done us all a service in getting us to think of important matters. Thank you.

Richard Block
Woodstock, New York

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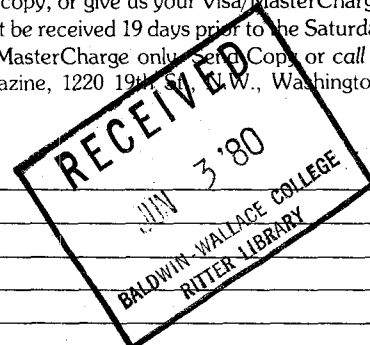
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My ad reads:



THE NEW REPUBLIC MAGAZINE

As part of my ongoing campaign to sell my soul to corporate America, I recently accepted an invitation from the Atomic Industrial Forum, the nuclear industry's trade association, to visit a nuclear power plant. The answers to the two questions now running through your mind are a) yes, I did have to wear those little yellow booties, and b) no, I have not begun to glow in the dark. The folks at AIF are congenial people who would like to win *TNR* over to their point of view, and no doubt they expected this excursion to help persuade me of the value and safety of nuclear power. But I'm afraid they cast their pearl before swine. For the record I should note that I haven't made up my mind on this issue. I would prefer the reader to think that my indecision reflects long hours of wrestling with all the complex technical and economic issues involved in nuclear power, but the truth is I just don't know enough about the subject to have an opinion. The plant itself was interesting, and since one of the reactors hasn't begun operating yet I was able to see parts of it that later will be sealed off. Most of these were wasted on me, since I couldn't tell you the difference between a reactor core and a ukulele. I admit I was slightly disturbed by the frequency with which my guide began his sentences, "This is something we've added since Three Mile Island. . . ." But I was also properly impressed with the dizzying array of equipment designed to prevent accidents, or to contain them once they occur. To be honest, the only thing I learned that I will remember six months from now is that there is good fishing in the bay where water is dumped after being heated in the plant. I spent a good part of the rest of the tour wondering which lures would work on glowfish.

Fishing, as careful *TNR* readers already know, is one of my favorite pastimes. A year ago Mike Kinsley and I had an argument over whether or not hunting is a cruel sport (of such scholarly debates are *TNR* editorial meetings made). In its defense, I noted that it was less cruel than fishing, since animals don't have to contend with hooks in their mouths. His rebuttal was that fish don't feel pain anyway. I am pleased to report that my editor was mistaken, as editors occasionally are. It seems that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Britain has reported that fish do indeed feel pain, particularly that caused by a hook in the mouth. Kinsley was distressed to learn of his error. I trust he is consoled by the knowledge

that he took all the fun out of fishing for me for an entire year.

Hunting and fishing are held in general disdain among my colleagues. Other blood sports, like book reviewing, are not. If you don't believe me, just ask long-suffering Gay Talese, whose most recent book, *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, was methodically bludgeoned in these pages by Barbara Grizzuti Harrison a few weeks ago. Unfortunately for Talese, most other reviewers have been no kinder. I, for one, think Talese deserves a great deal of credit for managing to make sex at once dull and offensive, and for providing us with the ennobling portrayal of a man who learns to enjoy watching other men screw his wife. But I hesitate to praise anyone who is so practiced at praising himself. Talese recently told the *Washington Post* that his latest work is a "great book," "exquisitely written, in my humble opinion." Hence he is baffled by the Bronx cheers of the critics, whom he described as "ugly," "mean-spirited," and "vengeful." He even suggested in an interview with the *Washington Star* that his detractors were sexually maladjusted—a surprising accusation to come from a man who is not ashamed for his daughters, much less his wife, to know that he patronizes massage parlors and participates in group sex bashes. Talese, of course, has been the darling of the critics for years, but I remember no occasion when he intimated that anyone who praised his book on the *New York Times* had a fetish for newsprint. He is so offended by the presumption of the critics who don't like *Thy Neighbor's Wife* that now he is threatening to write a book about them. Considering how unattractive Talese manages to make the characters in his latest book, this is a chilling prospect indeed. I hope we at *TNR* have learned not to trifle with the likes of Talese. When his next book appears, we should assign it to a reviewer who will treat it with the reverence it deserves. My personal choice is Gay Talese.

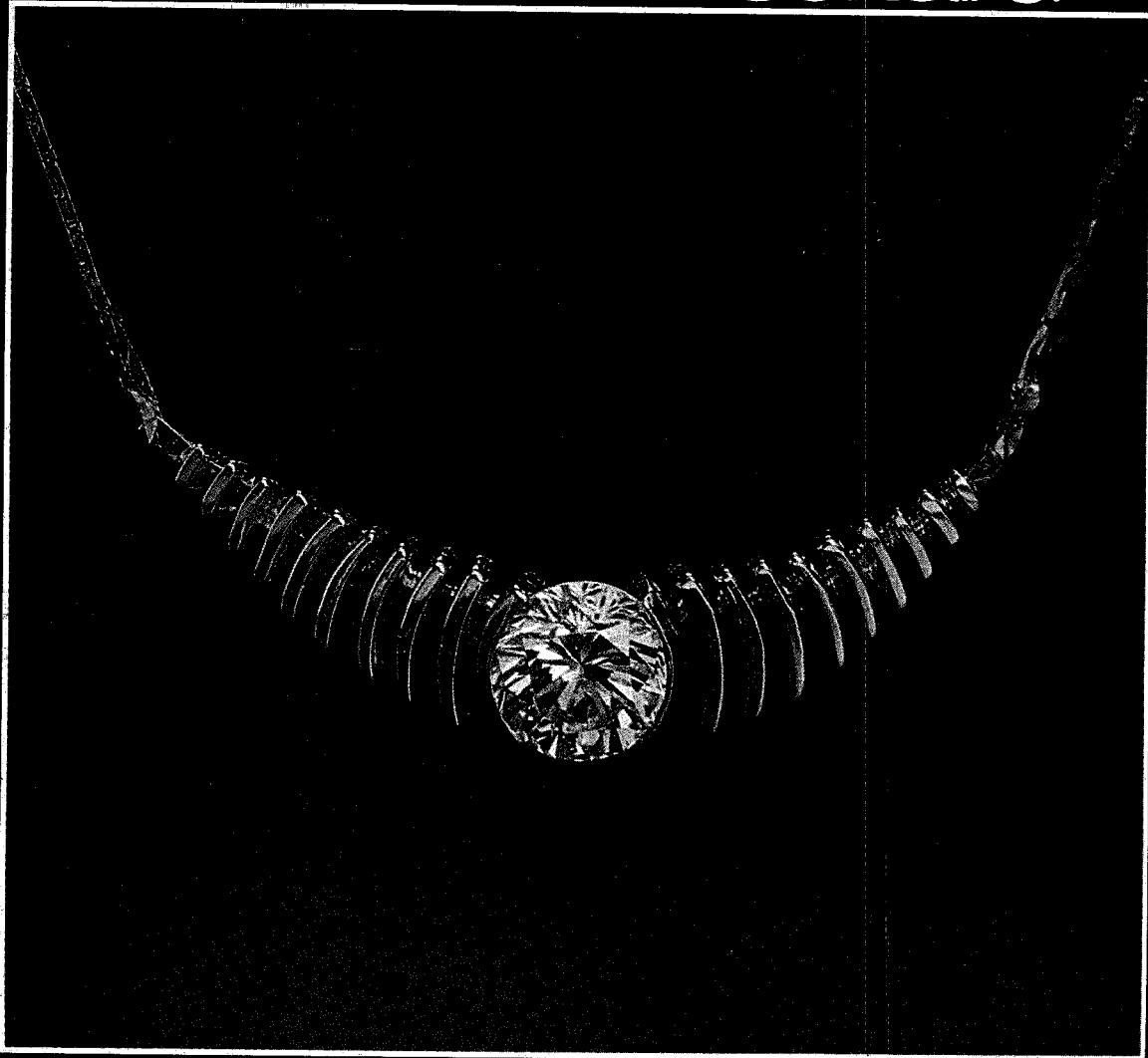
Talese is not the only *TNR* reader who has accused us of wanton cruelty. We have gotten some mail in recent weeks accusing us of being too critical of President Carter, and the editors were even invited over to the White House last week for a pep talk by a High Administration Official who thinks we've been too hard on his boss. When we mentioned our criticism of Carter's failure to propose decontrol of crude oil prices until 1979, the official told us,

"You have to remember the environment in 1977." I can easily understand why the White House and some readers may feel that outside criticism reflects an inadequate appreciation of the difficulties the president faces. But to suggest that we should give him the benefit of the doubt more often is to misunderstand the purpose of opinion journalism. It is the president's job to weigh all the political risks in making his decisions, but it is not our job to applaud him for doing so, or even to let him get away with decisions that he thinks necessary to his political survival. It is our job to try to make it politically harder for him to do what we think is mistaken, and easier for him to do what we think is right. The only way a magazine can accomplish these objectives is to criticize the president when he makes a bad decision and to praise him when he makes a good one. I would prefer that Carter give us more frequent opportunities for the latter, but that's his fault, not ours. On those occasions when Carter agrees with our editorial position but finds it politically impossible to do what we want, he should be grateful for our efforts to make it politically possible. When Franklin Roosevelt was visited by congressmen who wanted him to take a certain position, he would often tell them, "Go out there and put pressure on me." Roosevelt understood how to use his critics for his own ends, which is one reason he was a successful president. Carter apparently doesn't, which is one reason he isn't.

Sometimes it's rough being a man these days. As evidence I offer a new book called *The Classified Man: Twenty-Two Types of Men (and what to do about them)*. It was written by one Susanna Hoffman, Ph.D. (that's how the author's name appears at the top of every left-hand page), who purports to be a dancer, model, and actress with a degree from Berkeley. If this last is true, it should permanently reduce the marketable value of a Berkeley education. It's bad enough to be classified into one of 22 "unerringly accurate, unmistakable types." Worse still is that each of the categories sounds uniquely repellent. Which would you prefer to be—the Disaster Broker, the Amoral Passion Monger, the Maximal Misogynist, the "But I Really Like Women" Manipulator? Thanks, Dr. Hoffman, I'll pass, but when you come up with a category for Warm, Witty, and Sensitive, let me know.

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